

# Understanding Nazi Animal Protection and the Holocaust


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# COMMENTARY

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## UNDERSTANDING NAZI ANIMAL PROTECTION AND THE HOLOCAUST

Arnold Arluke<sup>1</sup> and Boria Sax<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract.** *It is well known that the Nazis treated human beings with extreme cruelty but it less widely recognized that the Nazis also took some pains to develop and pass extensive animal protection laws. How could the Nazis have professed such concern for animals while treating humans so badly? It would be easy to dismiss Nazi proclamations on animals as mere hypocrisy but there may be other explanations for the contradiction. For example, anecdotal reports and psychological evaluations of many prominent Nazis suggest they felt affection for animals but dislike of humans. Second, animal protection measures, whether sincere or not, may have been a legal veil to attack Jews and others considered undesirable. Third, the Nazis blurred moral distinctions between animals and people and tended to treat members of even the Master Race as animals at times. This article argues that at the core of the Nazi treatment of humans and animals was a reconstitution of society's boundaries and margins. All human cultures seek to protect what is perceived to be pure from that which is seen to be dangerous and polluting and most societies establish fairly clear boundaries between people and animals. In Nazi Germany, however,*

*human identity was not contaminated by including certain animal traits but certain peoples were considered to be a very real danger to Aryan purity.*

## INTRODUCTION

It is well known that the Nazis treated human beings with extreme cruelty. Grisly “medical” experiments on humans have been carefully documented and analyzed (e.g., Lifton 1986) as has the cold, calculated extermination of millions of people in the Holocaust (e.g., Hilberg 1961). Less well known are the extensive measures taken by Nazis to ensure the humane care and protection of animals. How could the Nazis have been so concerned about cruelty to animals while they treated people so inhumanely? It would be easy to dismiss the apparently benevolent Nazi attitude toward animals as “hypocrisy,” but this would be a facile way of evading an examination of the psychological and social dynamics of Nazi thinking and behavior. Rather than questioning the authenticity of the motivations behind Nazi animal protection—a question that is unanswerable—it may be more useful to ask how such thinking was possible and what significance it had.

We offer three explanations for this contradiction. First, at a personal or psychological level, this behavior may not seem so contradictory because anecdotal reports and psychological assessments of many prominent Nazi political and military leaders suggest they felt affection and regard for animals but enmity and distance toward humans. While love of animals is itself considered an admirable quality, under the Nazis it may have obscured

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brutality toward human beings, both on the personal and the political level, whatever its roots were. Second, animal protection measures, whether sincere or not, may have been a legal veil to level an attack on the Jews. In making this attack, the Nazis allied themselves with animals since both were portrayed as victims of “oppressors” such as Jews. Third, the Nazis abolished moral distinctions between animals and people by viewing people as animals. The result was that animals could be considered “higher” than some people. All three of these explanations argue for a culture where it was possible to increase the moral status of animals and decrease the moral status of some humans by blurring the boundaries between humans and animals, making it possible for National Socialists to rationalize their behavior and to disenfranchise large groups of humans.

Although our analysis assumes a position of analytic detachment, this stance should not be read as an excusing of Nazi behavior. Our analysis of the Nazi movement has far-reaching ethical implications, but these are largely beyond the scope of this paper. We believe, in this instance, that moral concern is best channeled into understanding; indeed, a highly moralistic discussion might obscure the dynamics of the National Socialist movement.

## Nazi Animal Protection

Around the end of the nineteenth century, kosher butchering and vivisection were the foremost concerns of the animal protection movement in Germany (Hoelscher 1949; Neff 1989; Trohler and Maehle 1987). These concerns continued during the Third Reich and became formalized as laws. On April 21, 1933, almost immediately after the Nazis came to power, they passed a set of laws regulating the slaughter of animals. At the start of 1933, the

Nazi representatives to the Prussian parliament met in order to ban vivisection (Proctor 1988). In August, 1933, over German radio Hermann Göring announced an end to the “unbearable torture and suffering in animal experiments” and threatened to “commit to concentration camps those who still think they can continue to treat animals as inanimate property” (Göring 1939, 70, 72). Göring decried the “cruel” experiments of unfeeling scientists whose animals were operated on, burned, or frozen without anesthetics. A ban on vivisection was enacted in Bavaria as well as Prussia (AMA 1933), although the Nazis then partially retreated from a full ban. The Nazi animal protection laws of November, 1933, permitted experiments on animals in some circumstances, but subject to a set of eight conditions and only with the explicit permission of the Minister of the Interior, supported by the recommendation of local authorities. The conditions were designed to eliminate pain and prevent unnecessary experiments. Horses, dogs, cats, and apes were singled out for special protection. Permission to experiment on animals was given not to individuals but only to institutions (Giese and Kahler 1944).

Inconspicuously buried in the animal protection laws of November, 1933 (point four, section two), was a provision for the “mercy killing” of animals. The law not only allowed but actually required that domesticated animals that were old, sick, and worn out, or for which “life has become a torment,” be “painlessly” put to death. The wording of the provision was ambiguous; it was not entirely clear whether a family would be required to kill, say, an old dog that did nothing but sit by the fire. One binding commentary, passed immediately after the laws themselves, mandated that an expert should decide whether further life for an animal was a

“torment” in unclear cases (Giese and Kahler 1944).

In addition to the laws against vivisection and kosher slaughter, scores of additional legal measures regulating the treatment of animals were enacted from 1933 through 1943, probably several times the number in the preceding half century (Giese and Kahler 1944). These covered in excruciating detail a vast array of concerns from the shoeing of horses to the use of anesthesia. One law passed in 1936 showed “particular solicitude” (Waite 1947, 41) about the suffering of lobsters and crabs, stipulating that restaurants were to kill crabs, lobsters, and other crustaceans by throwing them one at a time into rapidly boiling water (Giese and Kahler 1944). Several “high officials” had debated the question of the most humane death for lobsters before this regulation was passed, and two officials in the Interior Ministry had prepared a scholarly treatise on the subject (Waite 1977).

The Nazis also sought to protect wildlife. In 1934 and 1935, the focus of Nazi legislation on animals shifted from farm animals and pets to creatures of the wild. The preface to the hunting laws of March 27, 1935, announced a eugenic purpose behind the legislation, stating, “The duty of a true hunter is not only to hunt but also to nurture and protect wild animals, in order that a more varied, stronger and healthier breed shall emerge and be preserved” (Giese and Kahler 1944). Nazi veterinary journals often featured reports on endangered species (Proctor 1988). Göring, in particular, was concerned about the near extinction in Germany of bear, bison, and wild horse, and sought to establish conservation and breeding programs for dwindling species and to pass new and more uniform hunting laws and taxes (Irving 1989, 181). Göring’s Game Laws are still operative today.

A uniform national hunting association was created to regulate the sport, restock lakes, tend forests, and protect dying species. Taxes levied on hunters would be used for the upkeep of forests and game parks. Göring also established three nature reserves, introduced elk, and began a bison sanctuary with two pure bulls and seven hybrid cows on one of the reserves (Irving 1989, 182). He eventually succeeded in rearing 47 local bison. He also created a Game Research Laboratory, where he reintroduced night owl, wood grouse, heathcock, gray goose, raven, beaver, and otter, which Albert Speer (1970, 555) referred to as “Göring’s animal paradise.” Göring viewed forests almost in religious terms, calling them “God’s cathedrals,” and culling of game populations to prevent starvation or epidemics was conducted as a “pseudo-religious duty” (Irving 1989, 182).

The Nazi animal protection laws, formulated with considerable medical and legal sophistication, were characterized by an almost compulsive attention to detail. While bureaucratic thoroughness may have been the major driving force behind these documents, they also extended the scope of legal control far beyond the boundaries of human society by attempting a centralized regulation of all relationships, not only among people but throughout the natural world. The purpose of the Law for the Protection of Animals, as noted in its introduction, was “to awaken and strengthen compassion as one of the highest moral values of the German people” (Giese and Kahler 1944; Waite 1977, 41). The philosophical basis for the laws was the attempt to minimize pain, according to one doctoral dissertation written primarily during the Nazi period (Hoelscher 1949). The fact that animals were to be protected for their own sakes, rather than for their relationship to humanity, was described as

a new legal concept (Giese and Kahler 1944; Hoelscher 1949; Meyer 1975).

Like virtually all legal documents, these laws contained ambiguities and possible loopholes. In many respects, the laws of November, 1933, did not go far beyond the laws protecting animals in Britain, then considered the most comprehensive in the world. The severity of the punishments mandated by the German laws was, however, virtually unprecedented in modern times. "Rough mistreatment" of an animal could result in a punishment of two years in prison plus a fine (Giese and Kahler 1944).

It is not clear, however, how vigorously or conscientiously the animal protection laws were enforced, particularly outside of Prussia. Barnard (1990) maintains that several experiments on animals were conducted secretly by Nazi doctors. Hilberg (1961, 600–604) also describes several Nazi medical experiments on animals that preceded those on human beings. At any rate, Nazi Germany gradually became a state where petty theft could result in death, while violent crimes might go unpunished. Punishment did not fit the crime in any traditional sense. The new government retained the entire legal apparatus of the Weimar Republic but used it in the service of a different concept. In accordance with declarations by Hitler, for example, the laws of July 2, 1934, on "Measures for Protection of the State" provided that punishment was to be determined not by the crime itself but by the "fundamental idea" behind the crime (Staff 1964). Mistreatment of animals, then, might be taken by courts as evidence of a fundamentally antisocial mentality or even of Jewish blood.

The preoccupation with animal protection in Nazi Germany was evident in other social institutions and continued almost until the end of World War II. In 1934, the

new government hosted an international conference on animal protection in Berlin. Over the speakers' podium, surrounded by enormous swastikas, were the words "Entire epochs of love will be needed to repay animals for their value and service" (Meyer 1975). In 1936, the German Society for Animal Psychology was founded, and in 1938 animal protection was accepted as a subject to be studied in German public schools and universities. In 1943 an academic program in animal psychology was inaugurated at the Hannover School of Veterinary Medicine (Giese and Kahler 1944).

### **The Ideological and Historical Context**

Though it appeared politically monolithic, the Nazi movement contained a surprisingly wide range of intellectual opinions. The leaders, in general, showed little interest in abstract theory, and only Alfred Rosenberg even attempted to synthesize Nazism into a cohesive set of doctrines. One cannot, therefore, understand the movement as though it were centered around an abstract philosophy, searching for more formal kinds of logic and coherence. Nazism was far more a cluster of loosely associated concerns. Even leading National Socialists avoided committing themselves on the subject of ideology, emphasizing that in its totality, National Socialism was indefinable (Fest 1970).

Nevertheless, the National Socialists attempted to actualize a racial ideology and, in so doing, to create a new Germanic identity (Mosse 1966). The search for German national character certainly did not start during the Third Reich. The enormous anxiety and preoccupation of the Nazis over national identity and differentiation from other human groups was only a heightened version of Germany's long

obsession with its identity and its boundaries from other human groups and its relationship with animals. Essential to this construction of national identity were certain themes regarding man's connections to nature and animal life that were articulated in German romantic poetry, music, and social thought. These ideas shaped Nazi thinking and served as intellectual resources that were drawn upon and distorted as expedient.

*Man as Beast.* One influential theme, particularly evident in the work of Friedrich Nietzsche, was the rejection of intellectual culture and reason and the praising of animal instinct in man. This view attached enormous importance to the animal origin and character of man. It sought to celebrate the earth and beasts in mythical ways and to glorify Nietzsche's "blond beast" or "raubtier,"<sup>1</sup> playing up the beast in man as a type of "secret idol," possessing qualities of vitality, unscrupulousness, and blind will and obedience (Glaser 1978, 138).

Nietzsche was one of several heroes under Nazism whose work was distorted to become more brutal and aggressive, particularly his conception of the "blond beast." Glaser calls this element of National Socialism "man as predator." "The domestic animal who had been domesticated on the surface only was in the end superior to and more honest than man; in the predator one could 'rediscover his instincts and with that his honesty'" (Glaser 1978, 138). Animal instinct came to represent rebellion against culture and intellectualism. Returning to the animal nature within man, communing with nature, and elevating animal life to the level of cult worship were seen as alternatives to modernity, technology, and urbanization, according to Glaser. Acceptance of this view, it was thought, would lead to the spiritual

and ideological changes necessary and desirable in German cultural life for a new national self-identity to emerge (Gasman 1971).

As part of the rejection of culture, the new German, according to National Socialist ideology, was to disavow humanitarian behavior toward fellow humans as insincere. One element of this totalitarian system was the principle of contempt for certain human beings. Himmler, for example, called for renouncing "softness" (Fest 1970, 120). "False" comradeship and compassion were derogated. Instead of encouraging compassion, Hitler emphasized that the new German should emulate certain animal behaviors such as the obedience and faithfulness of pets and the strength, fearlessness, aggressiveness, and even cruelty found in beasts of prey, qualities that were among the movement's most stringent principles (Fest 1970, 120, 293).

The training of SS personnel illustrated the importance of these animal qualities, even if it ironically meant killing animals. It is alleged that after 12 weeks of working closely with a German shepherd, each SS soldier had to break his dog's neck in front of an officer in order to earn his stripes. Doing so, it was thought, would instill teamwork, discipline, and obedience to the Führer—qualities that were deemed more important than feelings for anything, including animals (Radde 1991).

Hitler himself pleaded for these qualities in German youth: "I want violent, imperious, fearless, cruel young people... The free, magnificent beast of prey must once again flash from their eyes... I want youth strong and beautiful..., and athletic youth... In this way I shall blot out thousands of years of human domestication. I shall have the pure, noble stuff of nature" (Maltitz 1973, 62). In another instance, Hitler called for German youth to be as "swift as whippets" (Grunberger 1971,



136a). These new Germans were to be part animal, renouncing a certain side of their humanity. The compassion normally reserved for humans was to be redirected toward animals, and the cold aggressiveness of animal instinct became the model German. Animals were to be identified with and compassion toward animals rather than humans was to be encouraged, if not required. This was, in fact, part of the intent of the animal protection laws.

*Reverence for Animals.* A second theme was that animals were to be regarded as moral if not sacred beings. For example, the German zoologist Ernst Haeckel, writing at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, attacked religion, primarily Christianity, for putting man above animals and nature, and for isolating man from nature and creating contempt for animals. He believed that man and animals had the same natural as well as moral status and that much of human morality stemmed from animals, claiming that Christian moral principles such as “do unto others as you would have them do unto you” were “derived from our animal ancestors” (Bramwell 1989, 49). In Haeckel’s view, animals were to be learned from, using the laws of nature as a way to reform human society. The function of human societies, like animal societies, was to survive, and biological fitness was essential to both. Not surprisingly, he supported “racial hygiene” through euthanasia (Bramwell 1989, 49). He deduced the ideal state from his observations of animals and nature, maintaining that the most efficient organization to ensure survival among animals (and therefore human society should adopt it too) was to be highly centralized and hierarchical, like the brain and nervous system (Bramwell 1989, 50). In his analyses, he stressed “duty” as essential to the success of an ideal society;

duty, he claimed, was a biological impulse shared with all animals in that they were bound to care for family and the larger collectivity, both necessary for survival.

This preoccupation with animals as moral beings influenced Nazi thinking. The Nazis called for redressing early wrongs to animals; man was to have a regard for nature as a moral duty. Goebbels commented in his diaries:

Man should not feel so superior to animals. He has no reason to. Man believes that he alone has intelligence, a soul, and the power of speech. Has not the animal these things? Just because we, with our dull senses, cannot recognize them, it does not prove that they are not there (Taylor 1983, 77).

The moral status of animals was to be changed in the coming German empire; they were to be sentient objects accorded love and respect as a sacred and essential element in man’s relationship with nature. For example, toward the end of the war, the editors of a book on legal protection of animals proclaimed, “Animals are not, as before [the Nazi period] objects of personal property or unprotected creatures, with which a man may do as he pleases, but pieces of living nature which demand respect and compassion.” Looking to the future, they quoted the words of Göring that “For the protection of animals, the education of humanity is more important than laws” (Giese and Kahler 1944).

As sacred things, society was not to violate animals by killing them, either for sport or for food. Their vision of the future included a world where animals would not be unnecessarily harmed, holding out as role models various groups that were seen as respectful toward animal life. Hunting became a symbol of the civilization left behind; meat eating became a symbol of the decay of other civilizations; and vegetarianism became a symbol of the

new, pure civilization that was to be Germany's future. Hunting was seen as appropriate to an earlier stage of man when killing animals involved some "risk" to the hunter. Now, only "sick" animals and those needed for food should be killed. When animals were to be killed for food, they were given a "sacred" status and their death was seen as a form of "sacrifice." This spiritual attitude toward animals, even those destined to be killed, could be seen in Nazi farm propaganda:

The Nordic peoples accord the pig the highest possible honor...in the cult of the Germans the pig occupies the first place and is the first among the domestic animals...The predominance of the pig, the sacred animal destined to sacrifices among the Nordic peoples, has drawn its originality from the great trees of the German forest. The Semites do not understand the pig, they do not accept the pig, they reject the pig, whereas this animal occupies the first place in the cult of the Nordic peoples (Brady 1969, 53).

*Holistic Attitudes.* A third theme, particularly expressed by philosophers such as Richard Wagner, exalted synthesis against analysis, unity and wholeness against disintegration and atomism, and Volk legend against scientific truth (Viereck 1965). Life, according to this view, had an organic unity and connectedness that should not be destroyed by mental analysis or physical dissection. "Mechanistic" science and the Jews perceived to be behind it were portrayed as part of a destructive analytic intellectualism that treated nature and animals mechanically by dissolving the whole into parts, thereby losing the invisible force that makes the whole more than the sum of its parts. It is important to understand that the Nazis were not opposed to science per se but only to a particular approach. They wanted a science that

was influenced more by Goethe than by Newton.

These attitudes helped to shape the Third Reich's criticisms of "mechanistic" scientific thinking and practices such as vivisection. The path of Western civilization had taken an incorrect turn, according to National Socialism. Mechanistic, exploitative technology, attributed to the Jews, was seen as cutting man off from his connections with nature and ultimately to his own spirit. Particularly influential was Wagner's thinking. Wagner had urged the smashing of laboratories and the removal of scientists and "vivisectionists." The vivisectionist, to Wagner, came to represent both the scientists' "torture" of animals as well as the capitalists' torture of the proletariat. Wagner also portrayed the vivisectionist as both evil and Jewish, but he was not alone in this. In *Gemma, oder Tugend und Laster* (Melena 1877), a sentimental novel of the 1870s that had done much to arouse public sentiment against animal experimentation, the author portrayed the vivisectionists as cultists who, under the pretense of practicing science, ritualistically cut up living animals in orgiastic rites. The author may not have intended to identify the vivisectionists in the novel with the Jews (it is very clear that membership in the cult of vivisectionists is a matter of volition rather than heredity) but the representation of vivisectionists in the book was so close to the popular stereotypes of Jews engaged in kosher butchering, it was inevitable that many people would make the connection.

*Biological Purity.* A fourth theme, also expressed by Wagner, involved Nordic racism and the biological purity of Aryans. The human race, it was argued, had become contaminated and impure through a mixing of the races and the eating of



animal flesh. "Regeneration of the human race" was linked to animal protection and vegetarianism (Viereck 1965, 119). Wagner's principal concern was with the notion of biological purification of Germany and its political future. He wrote that "present day socialism must combine in true and hearty fellowship with the vegetarians, the protectors of animals, and the friends of temperance" (Viereck 1965, 119) to save mankind from Jewish aggression. Viereck (1965, 119) refers to this "fellowship" as Wagner's "united front of purifiers" who could oppose the antivegetarian stance of Jews. According to Viereck, Wagner stated "the Jewish God found Abel's fatted lamb more savoury than Cain's offer" of a vegetable.

In an essay first published in 1881 entitled "Heldentum und Christenheit" (Heroism and Christianity), Wagner articulated an anti-Semitic theory of history that linked vegetarianism to Germany's future. This drew on the racial theories of Arthur Gobineau, the philosophy of Schopenhauer, and his own idiosyncratic brand of Catholicism. In abandoning their original vegetarian diet, Wagner believed, people had become corrupted by the blood of slaughtered animals. This degeneration was then spread through the mixing of races. Interbreeding eventually spread through the entire Roman Empire, until only the "noble" Germanic race remained pure. After their conquest of Rome, the Germans, however, finally succumbed by mating with the subject peoples. "Regeneration" could be achieved, even by highly corrupted races such as the Jews, through a return to natural foods, provided this was accompanied by partaking of the Eucharist (Wagner 1888a). Wagner also believed that one could not live without "animal food" in the northern climates, so he suggested that in the future there would be a German migration to warmer climates

where it would not be necessary to eat animals, thereby permitting Europe to return to pristine jungle and wild beasts (Viereck 1965, 119).

Racial contamination, it was argued, had mixed biologically inferior human stock with Aryan blood, thereby threatening the purity of the highest species. The physician Ludwig Woltmann (1936), for example, described the Germans as the highest species because of their perfect physical proportions and their heightened spirituality. He argued that life was a constant struggle against the biological decay of this highest species. This biological struggle was waged against the subhuman, a notion that can be linked to an intellectual undercurrent in the German movement known as the neo-Manichaeism, a third-century cosmology given a secular form by a Viennese monk at the beginning of the twentieth century.

The monk, Adolf Lanz, published a book called *Theozoology* that claimed that in the beginning there were two races, the Aryans and the Apes, that Lanz called the "animal people." The Aryans were pure and good whereas the animal people represented darkness and sought to sexually defile Aryans. Because of such interbreeding, the original Aryans and animal people no longer existed, but Lanz claimed that one could still distinguish and rank races according to the proportion of Aryan or ape blood they possessed. Thus Nordic people were close to pure Aryan and were ranked the highest race and Jews were ranked the lowest because they were close to pure ape (Rhodes 1980, 107). There are echoes of this idea in the writings of Wagner, who maintained in "Heldentum" that the Semitic races had always viewed themselves as descended from the apes, while the Aryan races traced their descent "from the Gods" (Wagner 1888a). According to Rhodes (1980, 108), there is some

evidence that Hitler read the work of Lanz and accepted his view.

The Nazis, in many ways, departed from the anthropocentric understanding of the cosmos that has dominated Occidental civilization since at least the late Middle Ages. Their world was not so much centered around man, at least as presently constituted, as about the process of evolution, conceived as a process of perpetual improvement through “survival of the fittest.” This process, however, was not viewed so much as a spontaneous process but as something that, in the contemporary world, sometimes required assistance (Proctor 1988). In other words, it became a project to biologically perfect what it meant to be German—a task not unlike that taken with German shepherd dogs who were deliberately bred to represent and embody the spirit of National Socialism. Van Stephanitz, the creator of this breed, sought national status for a local population of coyote-like dogs in the 1920s that were to be regarded as racially better dogs, analogous to better-bred humans, and whose only reason for existence was to go to war on the day hostilities began (Radde 1991).

Central to National Socialist ideology was the quest for racial purity by creating a “superrace” and eliminating “inferior races.” Indeed, laws passed under the Third Reich to improve the eugenic stock of animals anticipated the way in which Germans and non-Aryans were treated eugenically. Germans were to be treated as farm animals, bred for the most desirable Aryan traits while ridding themselves of weaker and less desirable animal specimens. Such remodeling of civilization was not to flout the “natural order,” meaning that distinctions between humans, animals, and the larger “natural” world were not to make up the basic structure of life. Rather, the fundamental distinction made

during the Third Reich was between that which was regarded as “racially” pure and that which was polluting and dangerous. The former was embodied in the Aryan people and nature, the latter in other humans who were synonymous with “lower” animals.

According to Hitler’s own fanciful anthropology, non-Aryans were subhuman and should be considered lower than domestic animals. He stated in *Mein Kampf* that slavery came before the domestication of animals. The Aryans supposedly subjugated the “lower races”: “First the vanquished drew the plough, only later the horse” (Hitler 1938). This, in Hitler’s imagination, was the “paradise” that the Aryans eventually lost through the “original sin” of mating with the conquered people. Such a view clearly placed certain people below animals. The Nazi notion of race in many ways assumed the symbolic significance usually associated with species; the new phylogenetic hierarchy could locate certain “races” below animals. The danger and pollution normally thought to be posed by animals to humans was replaced with other “races.” The Germans were the highest “species,” above all other life; some “higher” animals, however, could be placed above other “races” or “subhumans” in the “natural” hierarchy.

## UNDERSTANDING THE CONTRADICTION

### Concern for Animals/Antipathy for Humans

In trying to understand Nazi animal protection, we would be remiss to ignore the possibility that such measures stemmed

from personal interest in or affection for animals by key Nazi figures. Several members of the German general staff, for example, were reported to laud various qualities in their own pets, to support animal rights, and to oppose hunting and meat eating.

On the one hand, this explanation should be questioned because reports of Nazi compassion for animals are based, in part, on personal diaries or notes that may have been circulated or written to create a sympathetic image of Nazi leaders as warm and human people or as having values consistent with the National Socialist movement such as rural glorification.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, there are lines of evidence that support such an explanation. First, there is widespread consistency in reports of Nazi compassion for animals, some of which date to long before the 1930s and 1940s. Second, there are some data supporting this explanation that are not autobiographical or biographical but are based on direct personality assessments of Nazis. Third, the sympathetic attitudes toward animals are consistent with the prior cultural trends in German thinking discussed earlier. And last, these reports are often coupled with contemptuous attitudes toward humans that fit, in two respects, psychiatric profiles of Nazi leaders. The most common profile argues that intimate human relationships were more difficult for these individuals to sustain than were relationships with animals. A more recent profile (Lifton 1986) suggests that caring for animals may have been a coping device that allowed Nazis to “double” or maintain a sense of self as humane while behaving insensitively or cruelly toward humans. Thus, key members of the German general staff may have, for whatever motivation, personally identified with animals while having contempt for humanity. At this psychological level, animal protection

measures and the Holocaust seem more compatible than contradictory.

Not surprisingly, Adolf Hitler has received the most biographical study. The analyses describe his interest in animals and pets, as well as his vegetarianism and opposition to hunting, although his motivations for these behaviors are less clear. Bromberg and Small (1983), for instance, contend that Hitler’s compassion for animals was no more sincere than his interest in children; both were mere propaganda ploys, and he supposedly once shot and killed a dog without reason. The vast majority of anecdotal reports suggest a very different picture, however.

Dogs, as companion animals, appeared to be an integral part of Hitler’s entire life. His fondness and bonding with dogs was noted long before his rise to power. During the early 1920s, Hitler’s landlady, Frau Riechert, observed that a large dog named “Wolf” was his constant companion. Dogs, throughout much of his life, were Hitler’s closest attachments (Padfield 1984, 475). Toland (1976, 133) claims that Hitler “had a need for the faithfulness he found in dogs, and had a unique understanding of them,” commenting once that some dogs “are so intelligent that it’s agonizing.” According to Padfield (1984), Hitler frequently remarked on his wolfhound Blondi’s wholehearted devotion to him while expressing doubts about the complete loyalty of his staff.

According to Stone (1980, 62), in his last days, Hitler came to depend on the companionship of Eva Braun and his dogs, having his favorite dog and its pups with him in the bomb shelter. During these final days, Hitler permitted no one but himself to touch or feed Blondi’s pup, Wolf (Waite 1977, 425), and he risked his life every day by taking Blondi for a walk outside his bunker (Serpell 1986). When it came time for Hitler and others to commit suicide, he

could not bring himself to give Blondi the poison or watch her die (Payne 1960).

Besides dogs, Hitler apparently felt some bond with other animals. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler (1938) explained that deprivation had taught him to empathize with mice, so he shared his food with them. When living in Vienna, it was known that he would save bits of dried bread to feed the birds and squirrels when he read outside. He was particularly fond of birds, being drawn to ravens. He later gave special orders that ravens were never to be molested (Waite 1977, 41). Hitler, however, was most obsessed with wolves. According to Langer (1972), Hitler was “intrigued” by wolves and because Hitler loomed so large in German society, his interest was widely known.

In his earlier years, he used the nickname “Wolf”<sup>3</sup> (Langer 1972, 93). In the 1920s Hitler became friends with Frau Helena Bechstein, the wife of a famous Berlin piano manufacturer, who played the role of foster mother to Hitler. Hitler would often sit at her feet and lay his head against her bosom while she stroked his hair tenderly and murmured, “Mein Woelfchen” (Strasser 1943, 301). Hitler chose “Herr Wolf” as his cover name. His favorite dogs were Alsations, that is, “Wolfhunde” in German, and these were the only ones he allowed himself to be photographed with. In France he called his headquarters “Wolfschlucht” (Wolf’s Gulch), in the Ukraine “Werewolf,” in Belgium “Wolfsschlucht” (Wolf’s Gorge), and in East Prussia “Wolfschanze” (Wolf’s Lair)—saying to a servant there “I am the wolf and this is my den.”<sup>4</sup> After the Anschluss with Austria in 1938, he asked his sister Paula to change her name to Frau Wolf. The name of the secretary he kept for 20 years was Johanna Wolf. One of the tunes from a favorite Walt Disney movie that he whistled often and absentmindedly was

“Who’s Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?” (Langer 1972, 246). German guerrilla fighters who would provide resistance to allied forces were called the “werewolves” (Speer 1970, 555).

Certainly, Hitler was not alone in his interest in animals and his keeping of pets. Göring had several pet lions; Goebbels, Hess, Höss, and several other elite Nazis had pet dogs. A typical example of such affection was Klaus Donitz, admiral of the German Navy, who was known to have a deep love for dogs. When he would return home his first greeting was always for the family dog, a little Spitz named Purzel (Padfield 1984, 115). Later, he had another pet dog named Wolf whom “he loved dearly.” He remarked once “there is nothing in the world more faithful than a dog. He believes his master unconditionally. What he does is right” (Padfield 1984, 331). Donitz also expressed concern for the protection of stray dogs: “I think I shall start a kindergarten when I get out, a mixed one for puppies as well as children,” (Padfield 1984, 475). He did not, however, ever create such an orphanage. Padfield suggests that Donitz may have simply fallen under the influence of Hitler, who emphasized the virtues of obedience in animals, or conversely that he had doubts about the correctness of the path he was following or that he, like Hitler, had doubts about the complete loyalty of his staff.

As mentioned earlier, when it came to hunting, the only sportsman was Göring.<sup>5</sup> Other leading Nazis appeared to show little interest in it or staunchly opposed it, including Hitler, who was known to have a strong distaste for hunting. Toland (1976, 424–25), for example, recounts that once, when dinner conversation turned to hunting, Hitler commented: “I can’t see what there is in shooting, you go out armed with

a highly perfected modern weapon and without risk to yourself kill a defenseless animal" (Toland 1976, 424–25). Hitler frequently criticized hunting:

How can a person be excited about such a thing. Killing animals, if it must be done, is the butcher's business. But to spend a great deal of money on it in addition... I understand, of course, that there must be professional hunters to shoot sick animals. If only there were still some danger connected with hunting, as in the days when men used spears for killing game. But today, when anybody with a fat belly can safely shoot the animal down from a distance... Hunting and horse racing are the last remnants of a dead feudal world (Speer 1970, 115–16).

Nor was Hitler alone in his opposition to hunting. Himmler, for instance, had a "positively hysterical opposition to hunting," according to Fest (1975, 121). Indeed, Himmler's "lunch was ruined if he was reminded that animals had been slaughtered." He once protested to his doctor and future therapist:

How can you find pleasure, Herr Kerstein, in shooting from behind cover at poor creatures browsing on the edge of a wood—innocent, defenceless, unsuspecting? It is really pure murder. Nature is so marvellously beautiful and every animal has a right to live. It is this point of view that I admire so much in our forefathers. They, for instance, formally declared war on rats and mice, which were required to stop their depredations and leave a fixed area within a definite time limit, before a war on annihilation was begun against them. You will find this respect for animals in all Indo-Germanic peoples. It was of extraordinary interest to me to hear recently that even today Buddhist monks, when they pass through a wood in the evening, carry a bell with them, to make any woodland animals they might meet keep away, so that no harm will come to them. But with us every slug is trampled

on, every worm destroyed (Wykes 1972, 89–90).

Emulating Wagner,<sup>6</sup> Hitler and other elite Nazis became vegetarians (Waite 1977, 26). This practice incorporated Wagner's "blood" imagery by viewing meat eating as contaminating because animal blood was mixed with Aryan racial blood (Waite 1977, 26). Hitler hired a vegetarian cook (Payne 1960, 566) and became very critical of others who were not vegetarian, sometimes referring to meat broth eaten by others as "corpse tea" (Waite 1977, 19). On one romantic date, his female companion ordered sausage, at which Hitler looked disgusted and said: "Go ahead and have it, but I don't understand why you want it. I didn't think you wanted to devour a corpse...the flesh of dead animals. Cadavers!" (Waite 1977, 19). The vegetarianism of other Germans was a fad spawned by Hitler's preferences (Stone 1980, 62). Rudolf Hess, for instance, was not only a vegetarian, but a nonsmoker and non-drinker. Reportedly, he was so worried about the food he ate with Hitler in the Chancellery that he would bring his own vegetarian food in containers, defending his practice by saying that his food had to contain "biologically dynamic ingredients" (Manvell and Fraenkel 1971, 64).

Hitler, following Wagner, attributed much of the decay of civilization to meat eating. Among the many ideas that the dictator adopted from the composer was a belief that civilization could be regenerated through vegetarianism. Hitler would not touch meat, not out of considerations of health but of "absolute conviction" that decadence "had its origin in the abdomen—chronic constipation, poisoning of the juices, and the results of drinking to excess" (Rauschning 1940). Decay resulting from constipation was something that



in his mind could be avoided by not eating anything resembling feces and by purging often.

Several entries in Goebbels' diaries underscore the notion that vegetarianism symbolized a higher state of humanity to which Nazis aspired. In one entry, Goebbels observed that "He [Hitler] believes that meat-eating is harmful to humanity... It is actually true that the great majority of humanity is living a vegetarian life and that the animals that live on plants have much greater powers of resistance than those that feed on meat" (Lochner 1948, 188). In another entry, Goebbels noted: "At table the Fuhrer makes another strong plea for vegetarianism. I consider his views correct. Meat-eating is a perversion in our human nature. When we reach a higher level of civilisation, we shall doubtless overcome it" (Taylor 1983, 6). In another entry, Goebbels observed that Christianity was a "symptom of decay" because it did not advocate vegetarianism:

The Fuhrer is deeply religious, though completely anti-Christian. He views Christianity as a symptom of decay. Rightly so. It is a branch of the Jewish race. This can be seen in the similarity of religious rites. Both [Judaism and Christianity] have no point of contact to the animal element, and thus, in the end, they will be destroyed. The Fuhrer is a convinced vegetarian, on principle. His arguments cannot be refuted on any serious basis. They are totally unanswerable (Taylor 1983, 77).

Identification with animals by elite Nazi figures was often paired with their contempt for humanity, perhaps suggesting a psychological explanation for the coexistence of animal protection with human cruelty. Characterizations of Hitler's personality portray him as having contempt and fear of humans but compassion and

warmth for animals. Toland (1976, 425) notes that it became known in the Third Reich that Hitler had a deep affection "for all dumb creatures," but very little for men and women. "It was as though since the Viennese days he had turned away from the human race, which had failed to live up to his expectations and was therefore damned. At the heart of the mystery of Hitler was his fear and contempt of people." Similarly, Payne (1960, 461) observes that Hitler felt closer to and more compassion for certain animals than people, when it came to their suffering. Payne (1960, 461) reports that a German pilot recalled that "Hitler saw films given to him by a friendly maharaja. During the scenes showing men savagely torn to pieces by animals, he remained calm and alert. When the films showed animals being hunted, he would cover his eyes with his hands and asked to be told when it was all over. Whenever he saw a wounded animal, he wept." He hated people who engaged in blood sports, and several times he said it would give him the greatest pleasure to murder anyone who killed an animal.

Similarly, while Goebbels' attitude toward humans was contemptuous, his expressed attitude toward his pet dog was loving. Goebbels' diary entries, especially those written in the mid-1920s, were explicit about this split in feelings. Goebbels revealed:

As soon as I am with a person for three days, I don't like him any longer; and if I am with him for a whole week, I hate him like the plague... I have learned to despise the human being from the bottom of my soul. He makes me sick in my stomach, Phoeey! ... Much dirt [gossip] and many intrigues. The human being is a canaille [riff raff but also pack of dogs]... The only real friend one has in the end is the dog... The more

I get to know the human species, the more I care for my Benno [his pet dog] (Lochner 1948, 8).

Certainly, Hitler and Goebbels were not the only members of the German Nazi elite to identify with animals, express compassion for them, and praise traits in them such as obedience and aggressiveness while simultaneously showing contempt for humanity. Rudolf Hess, for instance, had a pet wolfhound named Hasso (Leasor 1962, 86). Höss, the commander of Auschwitz, was a “great lover” of animals, particularly horses. After a hard day of work at the camp, he “found relief walking through the stables at night” (Glaser 1978, 240). Eduard Wirth, a prominent physician at Auschwitz, had three pet dogs at one point. When two became ill, he referred to one of his rooms as their “sick ward.” When his favorite dog died, he wrote sadly to his wife of its death, noting that the dog “suffered a lot so I gave him morphine... It is good that he dies; he was in the end blind in both eyes” (Lifton 1986, 397, 399).

Psychological assessments of the personalities of a number of leading Nazi political figures also show evidence of distancing from humans and interest in animals. In one study (Miale and Selzer 1975), Rorschach tests were administered to Nazi prisoners of war. Results indicated several departures from “normal” test findings, with subjects seeing themselves as animals or subhuman in the Rorschach more often than controls. Half the subjects depicted themselves, or aspects of themselves, as animals (typically unevolved, low-level bugs, beetles, or insects); six of the subjects also offered self-portraits of themselves as subhuman or inhuman figures such as gremlins. Miale and Selzer (1975, 276) contend that the respondents’ animal responses had a “lack of vitality” indicating that this group was “cut off

from their vital impulses and were unable to be free and spontaneous. Their antisocial attitudes were not expressions of normal impulses, but rather of the repression and distortion of these impulses.” In short, the findings suggested that, on the whole, these men had an “incapacity to feel human feelings” (Miale and Selzer 1975, 282). Dicks’ (1972) research also found those Nazis studied to be “affectionless and lacking deep positive relations to human figures.”

### **The German-Animal Alliance Against Jews and Others**

National Socialist propaganda often portrayed Germany as a woman figure at one with nature but exploited and oppressed by demonic Bolsheviks, capitalists, and Jews (Fest 1970; Lane and Rupp 1978). These victimizers were seen as endangering the purity of the German “blood” and “spirit.” Animals, too, were being victimized by these oppressors, whether by slaughtering them according to kosher law or by using them as subjects in scientific experiments. Metaphorically, only a subtle difference separated the animal from the German victim in this struggle. By allying themselves closely to animals in their pursuit of animal protection, the hated “vivisector” became synonymous with the Jew, enemy of both animals and of Germans. Animal protection measures, then, may have served as a legal vehicle to express these anti-Semitic feelings.

Laws passed by the Nazis on April 21, 1933, to regulate butchering were not only a measure for the protection of animals. They also constituted a barely concealed attack on the Jews, whose “ritualistic slaughter” was characterized as “torment of animals.” The preamble to the laws stated:

The animals protection movement, strongly promoted by the National Socialist government, has long demanded that animals be given anesthesia before being killed. The overwhelming majority of the German people have long condemned killing without anesthesia, a practice universal among Jews though not confined to them, ...as against the cultivated sensitivities of our society (Giese and Kahler 1944).

The discussion that followed contained many further references to the horrors allegedly found in kosher butcher shops.<sup>7</sup>

The German movement against animal experimentation was also, from its inception, strongly associated with anti-Semitism.<sup>8</sup> In a decree issued on August 17, 1933, Hermann Göring, then chairman of the Prussian ministry, proclaimed that people “foreign” or “alien” to Germany viewed the animal as “a dead thing under the law...” He declared:

...will commit to concentration camps those who still think they can continue to treat animals as inanimate property... The fairy tales and sagas of the Nordic people, especially the German people, show the spirit of close contact, which all Aryan people possess, with the animals. It is the more incomprehensible, therefore, that justice, up to now, did not agree with the spirit of the people on this point as it did on many others. Under the influence of foreign [i.e., Jewish] conceptions of justice and a strange comprehension of law, through the unhappy fact that the exercise of justice was in the hands of people alien to the nation...the animal was considered a dead thing under the law... This does not correspond to the German spirit and most decidedly it does not conform to the ideas of national socialism (Göring 1939).

The statement is particularly noteworthy, since the very existence of concentration camps was generally not acknowledged at the time.

Nazi ideologues sought to link the history of Judaism to vivisection. The revelation of Abraham and Moses was understood as the dominant tradition of the Occident, which culminated in the industrial revolution and the human domination of nature.<sup>9</sup> The word “vivisection” (the same in German as in English) was often used broadly to refer to dispassionate dissection and analysis. For example, Wilhelm Stapel, a conservative writer of the Weimar Republic, noted that “more important than all the vivisection of intellectualism is the growth of a national myth...that blossoms forth from the blood” (Craig 1982). Judaism, in both actual and symbolic ways, was understood as the tradition of “vivisection.”<sup>10</sup> Nazi racial theorists regularly contrasted the supposedly cold, analytic mentality of the Jew, with that of “Nordic man,” who, they claimed, understood things organically as part of the natural world (Giesler 1938; Proctor 1988).

The anti-Semitism of the Nazis was a very radical form of an idea that is still familiar: that Jews and, by association, Christians had scorned the natural world. Some of the Nazis such as chief ideologist Alfred Rosenberg rejected Christianity as a sect of Judaism, and others tried to purify Christianity of its Jewish heritage (Mosse 1966). As a result, the distinction between Christianity and paganism in Nazi Germany grew increasingly unclear (Glaser 1978).

The link between animal protection and anti-Semitism is paradoxical, since the Old Testament celebrates animals with great passion and eloquence. Nevertheless, such an association may go back very far. In the fourteenth century, Geoffrey Chaucer satirized it in his *Canterbury Tales*. When the prioress is introduced, we are told how well she fed her hounds and how she would weep at the sight of a

mouse caught in a trap. But this same priestess uses her tale for a furious attack on Jews, accusing them of ritual murder of children (Chaucer 1969). More recently, in the midnineteenth century, philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1903) held that Jewish traditions were responsible for a view of animals as things.

The key figure in promoting this association in Germany was the composer Richard Wagner. Long after he died, his writing continued to have considerable impact on German thought. He dramatized his ideas respecting race and animal protection in the opera *Parsifal* and his prose would sometimes contain imagery featuring “blood,” of a sort that was constantly used in the rhetoric of Hitler and his followers (Craig 1982). In a letter of August, 1879, to Ernst von Weber, the founder of the Dresden Animal Protection Society and author of the influential *Die Folterkammern der Wissenschaft* (The Torture Chambers of Science), Wagner stated:

Until now I have respected the activities of such societies, but always regretted that their educational contact with the general public has rested chiefly upon a demonstration of the usefulness of animals, and the uselessness of persecuting them. Although it may be useful to speak to the unfeeling populace in this way, I none the less thought it opportune to go a stage further here and appeal to their fellow feeling as a basis for ultimately ennobling Christianity. One must begin by drawing people's attention to animals and reminding them of the Brahman's great saying “Tat twam asi” [“That art thou”]—even though it will be difficult to make acceptable to the modern world of Old Testament Judaization [the spread of Jewish blood and influence]. However, a start must be made here—since the commandment to love thy neighbor is becoming more and more questionable and difficult to observe—particu-

larly in the face of our vivisectionist friends (Wagner 1987).

Like Göring (1939) and others who would come later, Wagner identified vivisectionists with Jews.

A much expanded version of this letter was published under the title “Offenes Schreiben an Ernst von Weber” (Open Letter to Ernst von Weber) and dated October, 1879. The revision was even more emotional in tone. Wagner supported breaking into laboratories where experiments on animals were conducted, as well as physical attacks on vivisectionists. He closed with the melodramatic declaration that, should the campaign against vivisection prove unsuccessful, he would gladly depart from a world in which “no dog would any longer wish to live,” “even if no ‘Requiem for Germany’ is played after us” (Wagner 1888b). With Wagner's public and financial support and von Weber's skillful leadership, the Dresden Animal Protection Society soon became the center of the German anti-vivisection movement (Trohler and Maehle 1987).

As illustrated by the quotation from Wagner's original letter, anti-Semitic rhetoric in German suggested that persecution of Jews was sometimes perceived as revenge on behalf of aggrieved animals. Jews were identified as enemies of animals and implicitly Germans. In Wagner's outrage against the use of frogs in experiments, he explicitly identified “vivisectionists” as “enemies.” Vivisection of frogs was “the curse of our civilization,” according to Wagner. He urged the Volk to rid itself of scientists and rescue the frog martyrs. Viereck (1965, 108) maintains that Wagner created “a sort of moral Armageddon” between those “who free trussed animals” and those “who truss them to torture



them." Those who fail to untruss frogs were "enemies of the state."

After the death of Wagner in 1883, his followers, such as the brothers Bernard and Paul Förstner, continued the anti-Semitic campaign against vivisection. The latter became editor of *Thier-und Menschenfreund* (Friend to Animals and Man), the journal of the Dresden Animal Protection Society. Wagner's admirers in the twentieth century included such spokesmen for anti-Semitism as Houston Stewart Chamberlain, Alfred Rosenberg, and, most significantly, Adolf Hitler (Katz 1986).

Another close associate of von Weber who added prestige to the movement against vivisection was Friedrich Zöllner, a famous though controversial professor of astrophysics (Bretschneider 1962). In a popular book entitled *Über den wissenschaftlichen Missbrauch der Vivisection* (On the Scientific Misuse of Vivisection), first published in 1880, Zöllner launched a counterattack against the physiologists. In its inaugural issue the British magazine *Animal's Defender and Zoophilist* (published by an antivivisection society) ran a highly favorable critique of Zöllner's book, offering the following summary:

Zöllner who is a patriotic admirer of Bismark...agrees with the men of Bayreuth [followers of Wagner] in demanding an intellectual, moral and aesthetic regeneration of the German people. The press being in the hands of clever and ambitious Jews, and the teachings at universities being, explicitly or implicitly, atheistic, Professor Zöllner has no difficulty in tracing many of evils just mentioned [suicide, crime, usury, swindling and just about everything else] to the uncongenial influences of Judaism and Materialism. It would be wrong to say that vivisection is a Jewish pursuit, yet medicine is, in Germany at least, an eminently Jewish profession, and the press being still more

Jewish than the medical career, the difficulty of denouncing medical abuses or vivisectional brutalities is considerably greater than in any other country (Anonymous 1881).

The association between anti-Semitism and vivisection was not confined to Germany. It was also strong in Switzerland (Neff 1989), and the British reviewer obviously shared Zöllner's anti-Semitic views. The latter, however, sometimes expressed them in a particularly extreme manner, maintaining that Jews were by nature callous and bloodthirsty.

Zöllner, for example, attacked a Jewish zoologist named Semper, accusing him of showing gross insensitivity (a "thick skin" like that of an elephant) by hunting the birds that attacked his botanical gardens, with the following sarcastic remarks:

[O]ne would be justified in describing the anti-Semitic movement that has just recently appeared in Germany not as "persecution of Jews" but metaphorically as a "hunt for elephants." Because surely Professor Semper would recognize a right to hunt not only thrushes but also elephants if they broke into his garden and laid waste to the "garden for alpine plants and herbs constructed at considerable cost" with their crude feet. If one now compares Semper's garden in Würzburg with Germany and the expense of the alpine plants and ferns with the "considerable costs" of maintaining the universities, then the German people have the same right to hunt over-educated, Semitic "elephants" as Semper does to hunt the thrushes (Zöllner 1885).

The reversal of roles between hunter and animal is an old motif (Sax 1990) that appears frequently in literature against misuse of animals.

Although Zöllner did not unequivocally advocate physical attacks on Jews, this passage is an anticipation of the Nazi persecutions. Despite what the quotation



suggests, Zöllner seems to have been far less a vicious man than a complacent one. Confident that concern for animals proved his moral superiority, he could, elsewhere in his book, content himself with the most abstract expressions of compassion for the Jews. Many of his attitudes were later adopted by Nazi doctors, who attempted to purify medicine of “Jewish” influence (Proctor 1988).

### **Animals, People, and the New Natural Order**

While stressing the biological distinctions among types of human beings, the Nazis saw human life as part of the larger biological order that they sought to create. As part of this order, all human life, including Germans, were treated as animals. In the case of Germans themselves, they were regarded as livestock to breed the purest biological forms; non-Aryans were viewed as pests that could contaminate the racial purity so important to National Socialist aims. Such treatment of humans as animals was another reason why the combination of animal protection measures with cruelty toward humans may not have seemed so paradoxical to Germans. By animalizing human life, moral distinctions between people and animals were obliterated, making it possible to treat animals as well as humans, and humans as poorly as animals.

In *Mythos*, a book intended to have virtually scriptural authority within the Nazi movement, Alfred Rosenberg (1935) found it terribly ironic that more concern was shown about the racial pedigree of horses and donkeys than of human beings. To correct this, the National Socialists treated Germans themselves, in the most literal sense, as animals. Just as the breeding stock of “less pure” animals had been improved, so too was the “pure blood” of

Germans to be restored. According to Darré: “As we have restored our old Hanoverian horse from less pure male and female animals by selective breeding, we will also, in the course of generations, again selectively breed the pure type of the nordic German from the finest German bloodlines...” (Glaser 1978, 154).

Several leading Germans used their experience in farming, as well as their training in agriculture and veterinary medicine, to pursue this goal. For example, Martin Bormann had been an agricultural student and in 1920 became the manager of a large farm (McGovern 1968, 11–12). The new rector of the University of Berlin in the mid-1930s was by profession a veterinarian. He instituted 25 new courses in Rassenkunde—racial science—and by the time he finished rewriting the curriculum had instituted 86 courses connected to veterinary sciences as applied to humans (Shirer 1960, 250). And for a period of time in the 1920s, Himmler was a chicken breeder (Fest 1970, 116). Thus, veterinary medicine and agricultural science became the means of teaching racial doctrine in German universities (Bendersky 1985, 156). Indeed, National Socialism viewed Europe, including Germany, “as if it were a thoroughly neglected animal farm which urgently needed the elimination of racially poor and unhealthy stock, better breeding methods, etc. All of Europe and the East were finally to make biological sense” (Maltitz 1973, 289).

Much of Himmler’s knowledge about animal breeding practices was directly applied to plans for human breeding to further Aryan traits (Bookbinder 1989). One of Himmler’s obsessions was the breeding of many more superior Nordic offspring (Shirer 1960, 984). Financial awards were made for giving birth if the child was of biological and racial value, and potential mothers of good Aryan stock

who did not give birth were branded as “unwholesome, traitors and criminals” (Deuel 1942, 164–65). Encouraging the propagation of good German blood was seen as so important that several Nazi leaders advocated free love in special recreation camps for girls with pure Aryan qualities. In one of Himmler’s schemes, he argued that if 100 such camps were established for 1000 girls, 10,000 “perfect” children would be born each year (Deuel 1942, 165).

Despite the criticism of the Reich Minister of the Interior, who opposed the “idea of breeding Nordics” when it reached the point of “making a rabbit-breeding farm out of Germany” (Deuel 1942, 203), plans were developed for a series of state-run brothels, where young women certified as genetically sound would be impregnated by Nazi men. The intent was to breed Aryans as if they were pedigreed dogs (Glaser 1978). From a eugenic point of view, a weak animal will probably be of little use, no matter what the species. Young German women chosen to breed with specially selected good biological German male stock had their infants immediately taken away from them and put outside, unprotected, to see if they would survive in order to weed out inferior stock (Gailey 1990).

Other proposals and policies reflected a similar view of the German people as livestock to be improved through proper breeding. Laws passed to regulate marriage were based on “racial blood”; the goal was to prevent contamination of Germanic blood such that children born in Germany would be either purely Jewish or purely non-Jewish (Deuel 1942, 217). Even selection for membership in certain Nazi organizations, such as Himmler’s SS, emphasized pure Aryan qualities, the object being to draw the sons of the best genetic families into Nazi ranks. Preference was given to those applicants having a

certified family tree extending five or six generations, blond hair, blue eyes, and a height of six feet. They were to become the biological elite, the most pure Germans (Bayles 1940, 155). One proposal (Gasman 1971) suggested sending biologically unfit Germans into battle so that biologically superior individuals could be preserved for reproduction.

Medical research under the Third Reich also approached Germans as livestock. For instance, those familiar with Mengele’s concentration camp experiments believed that his thoughtlessness for the suffering of his victims stemmed from his passion about creating a genetically pure superrace “as though you were breeding horses” (Posner and Ware 1986, 42–43). The principal purpose of his experiments was to discover the secret of creating multiple births with genetically engineered Aryan features and improve the fertility of German women as well as find efficient and easy ways to mass sterilize “inferior races” (Posner and Ware 1986, 31).

While the German people themselves were dealt with as biological stock or farm animals, certain groups of people considered contaminating or threatening to German blood and culture were viewed as “lower animals” to be dispatched accordingly. When it came to discussing the goal of selecting out “inferior” races from the world’s breeding stock, the language used is full of references to contamination from contact with others considered dirty or polluting. Hitler referred to race “poisoning,” and others used terms such as “race defilement” and “corruption,” “decay,” “rot,” or “decomposition” of German “blood” (Weinstein 1980, 136) to refer to everything from innocent acquaintanceships to sexual relations with Jews (Deuel 1942, 210–11) and contact with their “harmful animal serum” (Brady 1969, 53). Even animals owned by Jews were

seen as racially contaminating to other animals. Viereck (1965, 254) cites the case of a German mayor who decreed that in order to further race purity, "cows and cattle which were brought from Jews, directly or indirectly, may not be bred with the community bull."

Those peoples deemed genetically contaminating were thought of and treated as animals. Such animal-labeling of people, typically emphasizing beastly or wild instincts, was not confined to Jews. "Foreign workers" were "pigs, dogs, they are creatures who are the counterfeits of human beings" (Grunberger 1971, 166). An SS propaganda booklet, *The Subhuman*, described all peoples of the "East" as "animalistic trash, to be exterminated" (Herzstein 1978, 365). Russian soldiers were a "conglomeration of animals" (Lochner 1948, 206), "unrestrained beasts" and "wild animals" (Maltitz 1973, 61) and had "primitive animality" (Herzstein 1978, 357). Even the Rumanian peasants, allies of the Germans, were described as "miserable pieces of cattle" (Maltitz 1973, 61).

When groups of people, most commonly Jews, were likened to specific animal species, it was usually "lower" animals or life forms, including rodents, reptiles, insects, or germs. Hitler (1938), for instance, called the Jews a "pack of rats," and Himmler, in order to help soldiers cope with having just shot one hundred Jews, told them "bedbugs and rats have a life purpose...but this has never meant that man could not defend himself against vermin" (Hilberg 1961, 219). The propaganda film *Triumph of the Will* superimposed images of rats over presumed "degenerate people" such as the Jews, and the 1940 film *The Eternal Jew* portrayed Jews as lower than vermin, somewhat akin to the rat—filthy, corrupting, disease carrying, ugly, and group oriented (Herzstein 1978, 309). Weinstein (1980, 141) reports that

because Jews were thought to be like chameleons—able to merge with their surroundings—they were made to wear the yellow Star of David so innocent Aryans would not be contaminated by the unwitting contact. Jews were also likened to bacteria and "plagues" of insects (Herzstein 1978, 354).

If in creating the human animal, insufficient distance was created from the pure German, there was also the notion of "untermenschen," or subhumans, lower than animals. As described in one SS document:

The subhuman—that creation of nature, which biologically is seemingly quite identical with the human, with hands, feet, and a kind of brain, with eyes and a mouth—is nevertheless a totally different and horrible creature, is merely an attempt at being man—but mentally and emotionally on a far lower level than any animal. In the inner life of that person there is a cruel chaos of wild uninhibited passions: a nameless urge to destroy, the most primitive lust, undisguised baseness... But the subhuman lived, too... He associated with his own kind. The beast called the beast... And this underworld of subhumans found its leader: the eternal Jew! (Maltitz 1973, 61–62).

Thus, the evolution of the notion of the human animal was to develop into an even lower and more distant (i.e., more dangerous in terms of pollution) form of life, the subhuman. This was the final twist on the Nazi phylogenetic inversion. Aryans and certain animals symbolized purity and were above human animals that were a contaminant involving impure "races" and "lower" animal species; the subhumans were below everything. Hitler, in fact, came to believe that Jews, as subhumans, were biologically demonic. He speculated that they descended from beings that "must have been veritable

devils" and that it was only "in the course of centuries" that they had "taken on a human look" (Hitler 1938) through interbreeding with Aryans. As the personification of the devil, Jews, to Hitler, were the main danger to the purity of the Aryan world (Staudinger 1981). Himmler, also buying into the notion of the subhuman, had studies made of the skulls of "Jewish-Bolshevik commissars" in order to arrive at a typological definition of the "subhuman" (Fest 1970, 113).

When coupled with a desire for racial purity, the conception of certain people as animal-like may have facilitated experimentation on concentration camp inmates as though they were as expendable as laboratory rats. At the Ravensbrück concentration camp for women, hundreds of Polish inmates—the "rabbit girls" they were called—were given gas gangrene wounds while others were subjected to "experiments in bone grafting" (Shirer 1960, 979). In some cases, concentration camp inmates were substituted for animals before human trials would normally occur. For example, in 1941 Himmler approved use of camp inmates in a sterilization study of a plant extract based on premature findings from rodent research, and in 1943 he authorized the reversal of a research study on jaundice that formerly injected healthy animals with virus from jaundiced humans so that humans could be injected with virus from diseased animals (Hilberg 1961, 601–602, 604). More typical were medical experiments on people that had not even been tried previously on animals. Experimenters such as Mengele referred to camp inmates as human "material" and their body parts as "war materials" (Posner and Ware 1986, 17, 39). At Belsen, staff viewed their work in terms of how many "pieces of prisoner per day" were handled, and letters from IG-Farben's drug research section and

Auschwitz camp authorities made reference to "loads" or "consignments" of human guinea pigs (Grunberger 1971, 330).

Conceiving of certain people as animal-like also facilitated their execution. Those deemed "unfit" or "unworthy" of life were considered "degenerate" and if permitted to breed, they would only contaminate German stock and reduce its physical, mental, and moral purity (Deuel 1942, 221, 225). Hence, the need for "hygienic prophylaxis" (Herzstein 1978, 66). Jews, in particular, were viewed as "breeders of almost all evil" (Shirer 1960, 250). The expectation was that those humans deemed polluting and dangerous "racially" would be eliminated through a program of euthanasia, "mercy killing," or "Gnadentod" for those with "lives not worth living" (Lifton 1986; Proctor 1988), a notion that is strikingly similar to the 1933 animal protection regulation regarding euthanasia. The first to be given a "mercy death" were incurably insane persons or deformed infants (Hilberg 1961, 561; Peukert 1987) under a 1939 plan that became known as the "euthanasia program." The killing was then extended to older children. Ironically, Jewish children were at first excluded from the killing. According to the bizarre, dreamlike logic of the National Socialists, Jews did not deserve such an "act of mercy" (Proctor 1988).

The Holocaust was eventually broadened to include Jews, Gypsies, alcoholics, homosexuals, criminals, and almost anyone else the regime objected to. Extermination of humans considered to be contaminating extended beyond the killing of millions in concentration camps. By giving only limited medical and dental care, and encouraging abortions, the empire envisioned by the Nazis would not maintain native populations, such as those in

Southern Russia. It was a philosophy of utter contempt and revulsion for those thought of, in Himmler's terms, as "these human animals" (Maltitz 1973, 288–89). Speaking to his SS officers, Himmler commented: "We Germans, who are the only ones in the world who have a decent attitude toward animals, will also show a decent attitude toward these human animals, but it would be a crime against our own blood to worry about them" (Maltitz 1973, 41).

## CONCLUSION

If the real Nazis were the comic-book figures of popular melodramas, their deeds would be no less horrible. The phenomenon we have examined, however, would be less profoundly disturbing. Our analysis raises what is to most contemporaries a troubling and unsavory contradiction, namely, that Establishment concern for animals in Nazi Germany was combined with disregard for human life.

This paradox vanishes, however, if we see that the treatment of animals under the Third Reich really tells us about the treatment of humans and the cultural rules and problems of human society. All cultures seek to order human existence in terms of certain basic assumptions, including that which is seen as pure and that as polluting. In this conceptual apparatus shared by all cultures, things considered to be contagions become dangers that have to be contained in order to protect what is perceived to be pure. By containing the danger of pollution, people can further the illusion of their power as they seek to guard the ideal order of society against the dangers that threaten it. "Laws of nature" are cited to sanction the moral code and social rules that define what is considered to be a dangerous contagion. The elimination of pol-

luting elements may simply be a positive effort to organize a "safe" environment by preserving the integrity of what is considered pure.

At the core of this dichotomy of purity and danger is a design of society, or what constitutes its boundaries and margins (Douglas 1966). In many societies, differences between humans and other species serve as fundamental reminders of what is considered to be pure and what is thought to be contaminating; indeed, they define what it means to be human by maintaining reasonably clear boundaries between humans and animals. In Nazi Germany, however, the conception of what it meant to be German, or pure, relied more heavily on seeing other groups of people as the societal danger rather than other species. German identity was not contaminated by including within it certain animal traits or by seeing itself closely related to animals in moral, if not biological terms. In short, Nazi German identity relied on the blurring of boundaries between humans and animals and the constructing of a unique phylogenetic hierarchy that altered conventional human-animal distinctions and imperatives.

We saw this blurring, for example, in the concern for animals and devotion to pets demonstrated by many prominent Nazi Germans. On the one hand, animals were seen as "virtuous," "innocent," and embodying ideal qualities absent in most humans. Indeed, to hunt or eat animals was itself defiling, a sign of "decay" and perversion. People, on the other hand, were seen with "contempt," "fear," and "disappointment." In fact, to kill certain people furthered the Nazi quest for purity. We also saw this blurring in the alliance of Germans with animals against their "oppressors," Jews and others labeled as "vivisectionists" and "torturers." In facing a common danger, Germans likened themselves,



as “victims,” to animals and distanced themselves from human “victimizers.” Finally, we saw this blurring in the animalization of Germans themselves as well as other humans. To cope with their greatest threat, the “genetic pollution” of a pure, holistic, natural people, Germans were encouraged to fight for their survival with the same unfeeling determination as any species of life. As part of the natural order, Germans of Aryan stock were to be bred like farm stock while “lower animals” or “subhumans,” such as the Jews and other victims of the Holocaust, were to be exterminated like vermin as a testament to the new “natural” and biological order conceived under the Third Reich.

From this perspective, the paradox noted above fades. What contemporaries would consider cruel and inhumane behavior toward categories of people was seen in Nazi Germany as acceptable behavior toward polluted “lower” humans. What contemporaries would regard as inconsistently humane behavior toward animals, in light of the treatment of certain human groups, was seen in Nazi Germany as quite consistent given the consanguinity (in holistic, pure Nature) of certain “higher” humans and animals. The Holocaust itself may have depended on this unique cultural conception of what it meant to be human in relation to animals.

## NOTES

1. The conventional translation of “raubtier” is “beast,” but a more exact one would be “predator” or “carnivore.” The Nazis, in identifying with predators celebrated in heraldry, were aligning themselves with warriors of old. While predatory instincts were praiseworthy in Germans, they were criticized in Jews. While visiting Munich in 1935, Craig (1982) reports that head gauleiter Julius Streicher offered “scientific evidence of the predatory nature of the

Jews, at one point arguing insistently that, if one were attentive while visiting zoos, one would note that the blond-haired German children always played happily in sandboxes while the swarthy Jewish children sat expectantly before the cages of beasts of prey, seeking vicarious satisfaction of their blood-tainted lusts.”

2. Attachment to dogs also served to tie Nazi Germany to the rural glorification of its Romantic past. It became important to portray German leaders as close to nature and having values compatible with a simple agricultural way of life; the soil was seen as the source of life and inspiration. Old Germans, Himmler argued, were nature worshipers, and so too should be new Germans, who he tried to sell on the nobility and virtues of farm life (Deuel 1942, 162–63). Companionship with dogs provided a link between the soil and humanity. A great deal was written about Hitler’s fondness for dogs during the 1930s and 1940s, and many pictures were taken to prove it was so as part of a propaganda campaign to demonstrate Hitler’s “modesty and simplicity,” which according to Langer were key values behind rural glorification (1972, 56). One example of such a propaganda photo appears in Toland (1976, 341) of Hitler and “two friends” (two dogs), and another appears in Maltitz (1973, 232e) of Hitler relaxing with a dog.
3. A number of prominent Nazis also had animal nicknames. Martin Bormann was known as the “bull” because of his short thick neck; Klaus Barbie was known as “gorilla ears” in reference to the simian shape of his ears (Murphy 1983, 36); and Goebbels was called “Mickey Mouse” (Grunberger 1971, 335). Even special preferences in art often demonstrated Hitler’s particular interest in animals. His favorite painting, for instance, was Correggio’s “Leda and the Swan”; the swan is central to the painting and is in interaction with a female. Goebbels’ favorite painting was Boecklin’s “Sport of the Waves,” which shows half human and animal characters of mermaids and mermen (Hanfstaengl 1957, 63).
4. The only headquarters not named after wolves was still named after an animal. According to Toland (1976, 832), Hitler’s other headquarters in 1940 was called the Eagle’s Eyrie.
5. Hermann Göring was the only member of the general staff who was a devotee of hunting, and even in his case, he expressed marked interest and caring for companion animals and

animals in general. Göring was widely known to be unusually fond of and dedicated to several pet adult lions kept at his estate. According to Irving (1989, 180), chief forester Ulrich Scherping claimed that those who saw Göring with his lions could sense the fondness that they had for each other. He was, however, also a driven hunter, a fact that bothered Hitler, who called Göring's hunting associates "that green freemasonry." So involved with his hunting expeditions, Göring kept extensive hunting diaries interspersed with notes of diplomatic and political meetings at hunts. Göring also considered being a good hunter necessary for promotion in the Luftwaffe.

6. Although a belief in Wagner's argument is the most persuasive and common explanation for Hitler's vegetarianism, several other attempts to explain this vegetarianism have been made. There is at least one instance (Huss 1942, 405) where Hitler's diet was attributed to his inability to tolerate the thought of animals being slaughtered for human consumption. For Langer (1972, 56) such an "animal person" account was a deliberate portrayal of Hitler as kind and gentle. Both accounts can be considered plausible, one having more to do with individual motivation, the other with portrayal and use in a wider, propaganda sense. Langer (1972, 191) also suggests that Hitler only became a real vegetarian after the death of his niece. In clinical practice, one often finds compulsive vegetarianism occurring after the death of a loved one. Another writer maintains that his vegetarianism was due to chronic indigestion and the medical necessity to avoid meat (Bayles 1940, 47).
7. Accounts from this period of kosher butchering as a form of ritualistic torture resemble other slanders that have been used against the Jews, such as the kidnapping and murder of children or the killing of Christ. Cultural attitudes tend to find expression in common symbols, even when the views are never made explicit. The connection between the previously mentioned accusations against Jews and kosher butchering must sometimes have been reinforced by Christian symbolism, where Christ is represented by the sacrificial lamb.
8. The anti-Semitic basis of Nazi antivivisection was popularly known and apparently embraced by the citizenry, as suggested in the following anecdote. During one study course arranged by the party, a lady lecturer had told

in all seriousness of her experience with a talking dog. When asked "Who is Adolf Hitler?" the dog replied, "Mein Fuhrer." The lecturer was interrupted by an indignant Nazi who shouted that it was abominable taste to relate such a ridiculous story. The lecturer, on the verge of tears, replied, "This clever animal knows that Adolf Hitler has caused laws to be passed against vivisection and the Jews' ritual slaughter of animals, and out of gratitude this small canine brain recognized Adolf Hitler as his Fuhrer" (Toland 1976, 528).

9. This is not to say that the Nazis were against technology. They took pride in feats of engineering such as the construction of the autobahn (Giesler 1938). In many ways, they carried technocratic control to a unique extreme. Hitler (1938) himself often invoked the ideal of "progress." But the movement also exploited a longing for a simpler, preindustrial way of life. The Nazis wished to take full credit for the advantage of technology, while using Jews as scapegoats for the accompanying problems.
10. While the vivisectionist was explicitly identified with the Jew, vivisectionist imagery was also used to express the Romantic critique of society. For Wagner and others, animals were dynamic and sacred expressions of life that should not be destroyed politically by the atomistic state, mentally by analysis, or physically by vivisection. In at least one case, Wagner used vivisectionist imagery to attack the uninspired "dusty office desks" of government bureaucracies that he described as "modern torture-rooms...between files of documents and contracts, the hearts of live humanity are pressed like gathered leaves" (Viereck 1965, 109).

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# COMMENTARY

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## COMMENT ON ARLUKE AND SAX: "UNDERSTANDING NAZI ANIMAL PROTECTION AND THE HOLOCAUST"

*Anthrozoös* (5:6–31) carried an article exploring the meaning of the Nazi attitudes to animals and their treatment of people, particularly Jews. The authors, Arnold Arluke and Boria Sax, argued that although it would be easy to dismiss Nazi animal protection proclamations as mere hypocrisy, there may be other explanations for the contradiction. For example, anecdotal reports and psychological evaluations of many prominent Nazis suggest that they felt affection for animals but dislike of humans. Second, animal protection measures, whether sincere or not, may have been a legal veil to attack Jews and other groups who were considered undesirable. Third, the Nazis blurred moral distinctions between animals and humans and tended to treat even members of the "Master Race" as animals at times. The authors suggest that at the core of Nazi treatment of humans and animals was a reconstitution of society's boundaries and margins. All human cultures seek to protect what is perceived to be pure from that which is seen to be dangerous and polluting. Most societies establish fairly clear boundaries between people and animals. In Nazi Germany, however, human identity was not contaminated by including certain animal traits but certain peoples were considered to be a very real danger to Aryan purity.

The following comments were solicited in response to the original article and are followed by a response by one of the two

authors, Arnold Arluke. Boria Sax chose instead to include some personal reflections on the meaning of the Holocaust and reactions by others to the original article. His article follows the commentaries and Arluke's response.

Editor

### NAZI IDEOLOGIES AND THE BOUNDARIES OF BEING HUMAN

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At first glance, it seems a paradox that the Nazis, perpetrators of such horror toward fellow humans, should love animals. Compassion and love do not fit into our image of Nazi Germany as embodying evil. Partly for that reason, no doubt, the phenomenon of Nazi treatment of animals/nature has received too little attention.

I had several responses to Arluke and Sax's interesting and thought-provoking article. Their work certainly offers an explanation of the apparent paradox. Moreover, although the focus is the Nazis, the authors raise issues which resonate with current concerns. The ideology under discussion, while abhorrent in terms of its historical consequences, was not necessarily unique. Perhaps more important, it is significant because of what we can learn from it—not only within studies of human/animal relationships, but within a wider scholarship. I want to raise these issues while looking at three particular aspects of the ideology that Arluke and Sax have discussed.



## Science vs. Nature

One issue that they raise is the tension between mechanistic science as progress and the romantic ideal of idyllic nature. In the Germany of the 1930s, that tension took particular forms; Arluke and Sax refer, for instance, to the derogation of mechanistic science by associating it with Jews, while “nature” was revered. Nature, in this framework, was holistic. Animals, as part of nature, could not be understood by the reductionist and invasive techniques of science. It is unsurprising that antivivisectionism was, then, part of that view.

These concerns have resonance today, although we see them in somewhat different form. Environmentalism often takes the form of romantic beliefs in the purity of nature, and is frequently aligned with profound rejection of mechanistic science. That antiscience feeling has an obvious source; those concerned with environmental issues or animal rights are well aware of ways in which 20th-century science has contributed to degradation of the environment. Romanticizing nature and opposing it to science was certainly not unique to the Nazis (although the forms it took relied on a particular kind of romanticism intrinsic to German history).

The study of human/animal relationships is caught somewhat uneasily within that tension. On the one hand, we use scientific methods to study those relationships, and rely on bodies of knowledge that are part of science (ethology, for example). On the other hand, there is undoubtedly a thread of romantic images of nature and animals running through the literature. It is at its strongest in the rhetoric of the animal rights movement (see Jasper and Nelkin 1992), but it underlies the more academic writing, too.

The Nazis constructed their images of

“nature” just as we do. This is important to remember while we construct scientific accounts of human and animal behavior. Even such “objective” accounts embody particular *constructions* of nature, which in turn rest upon specific assumptions about our own society and its “naturalness.” Other human societies construct nature differently (see Haraway’s discussion of the construction of nature in primatology [1989]).

## Nazism and Gender

Arluke and Sax also touched on the implicit gender ideology of Nazism, both in terms of ideas about gendered characteristics and in terms of policies around human reproduction. As they point out, Germany was seen as a woman, at one with nature (though exploited by subhumans); yet at the same time, that same ideology derogated certain aspects of femininity, extolling “masculine” virtues instead. “Softness” and compassion were discouraged and fearlessness and aggressiveness were made into virtues. The masculinity on which Nazi ideology was founded was mirrored in some parts of nature, wolves, for example, and it was explicitly counterposed to the “effeminacy” of much of European civilization and particularly to Jewish culture (Hoch 1979).

That extreme masculinist ideology, coupled with the slippage between “human” and “animal” boundaries, allowed the Nazis to consider policies that would tightly control human reproduction, much as humans control animal breeding for our own use. For women of the “master race” breeding was expected; for women of other, “subhuman,” races sterilization was likely.

Our beliefs in human freedoms seem particularly threatened by interference

(perhaps especially State interference) in reproduction. We do not like to think of ourselves as prize livestock. That is part of the gruesome fascination of reading about Himmler's plans for "recreation camps" or for Aryan brothels. Yet there is a danger that, in that fascination, we see those plans as aberrant and unique to Nazi ideology. They were not. Feminist theorists have repeatedly pointed out that throughout the world today women often have little control over their own reproduction. State-policies (or the World Bank) regulate human reproduction; women often have few choices and little control. For many feminists, the parallel with the treatment of livestock is obvious: both women and cattle seem to be expected to reproduce to order (see Corea, 1985, for an example of this rhetoric).

Indeed, the kind of scenario that Arluke and Sax invoke from Mengele's experiments is exactly that which many feminist writers fear: to "discover the secret of creating multiple births...and improve the fertility of German women." Both women and cattle are diminished by becoming livestock (see Adams 1990).

## Animals vs. Humans

One important point raised by the example of Nazi ideology is that it shows that we could construct our meanings of animals/nature, and humans, in quite different ways. The boundaries that give meaning to ideas are not defined in that ideology as unitary "animals" vs. "humans" but cut across those concepts.

Blurring the boundaries between humans and animals does seem to cause anxiety to many people: much is written to defend the "specialness" of our own species against any other claims. Within Nazi ideology, the boundaries were not only

blurred, they were located in a different place. This change in boundaries seems particularly threatening. It seems to make distinctions between humans; some people become categorized as subhuman, unworthy of human civilization, and relegated to the status of "beasts." We should undoubtedly be concerned; there were very real, and horrifying, consequences of that element of the ideology. But we should remember that these consequences do not necessarily follow from shifting those boundaries. Rather, they follow from shifting the boundaries *and* simultaneously incorporating hierarchies of superiority/inferiority, dominance/submission, human/subhuman.

Distinguishing between different kinds of persons worries many people because it often carries the weight of hierarchy. Distinguishing between people on the grounds of race or gender, for example, may run into racist or sexist beliefs in superiority of one category over another. But we also need sometimes to emphasize and theorize about differences, and what those differences mean for human experience. Feminist theory, for example, drawing on postmodernism, has begun to focus upon difference, pointing out that the category "woman" is far from being homogeneous (e.g., Harding 1991). That kind of theorizing is founded upon an underlying belief in difference-with-equality.

Although many may find such a concept intellectually more acceptable, it remains, as does so much of Western thought, reliant on an unquestioned assumption of human separation from, and superiority to, other animals. Fashionable concerns with diversity and difference do not step beyond the boundaries of what is human and rest on particular assumptions about animals as everything we are not (or would prefer not to acknowledge). The critical questioning that led to theorizing

around differences and boundaries between humans has failed to address the boundaries of what is human in the first place (see Birke 1991).

For my reading of Arluke and Sax's work, the most important lesson is the reminder of how different human cultures *construct* particular ideas. There is nothing natural or essential about the ideas with which the Nazis worked, any more than our own. We should always question the categories we use, *especially* those that seem most unquestionable; "nature," "human," and "animals" being the most obvious. They are also central to any understanding of "human/animal" relationships.

## **"NAZI ANIMAL PROTECTION AND THE JEWS": A RESPONSE**

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The programs devised by the Nazis to protect animals, in stark contrast to the programs devised to destroy human beings, provide significant insight into the Nazi mind, values, and behavior. Nazism was a rebellion against much that had been basic to western civilization and was particularly a rebellion against many of the changes that had taken place in the western world since the enlightenment of the 18th century. Nazism rejected anything associated with Judaism and therefore rejected much that was basic to the Christian tradition. Many of the Nazi leaders included in their vision of the future a rejection of Christianity in total and a return to a type of tribal paganism that they associated with the ancient Germans. Many of the pre-Christian nomadic tribes had worshiped nature and held animals in awe as the highest expression of creation.

Hermann Göring, one of the principal advocates of this tribal mentality, expressed ideas basic to Nazism when he declared with pride, "Yes we are barbarians, and we think with our blood." He also declared, "When I hear the word culture I reach for my gun." Substituting instinct and emotion for reason, Göring contrasted the forest with the boardroom and the classroom, and the hunter with the financier and scholar. For him, the hunter and the forest represented the more authentic and purer form of life and the financier and the scholar, the boardroom and the classroom, characterized an effete, materialistic, and nonauthentic form of existence. The barbarian hunter was much closer to the stag, elk, and wild boar than he was to the banker or the professor.

Walter Darré, the Nazi Minister of Agriculture, contrasted the farmhouse with the tenement and, like so many Nazis, condemned the city as a place of decadence in contrast to the wholesome countryside. The farmer was much closer to his barnyard animals than he was to urban businessmen and intellectuals. The banker or professor that Göring and Darré vilified were represented in their mind, and those of many Nazi officials and supporters, by the Jew. The Jew was the ultimate urban business and intellectual figure totally alienated from nature, particularly the soil and animals, and devoid of true feelings. Thus it followed that the Nazi could have more concern for animals than for Jews.

The Nazi view of the Jew was a complex one formed from different strands. One of these strands contained the picture of the Jew as the personification of evil: lustful and uncontrollably sensual, greedy, and overwhelmingly materialistic. This strand of thought played upon the ancient prejudices embedded in Christian dogma and western history and stressed seduction, ritual murder, usury, and conspiracy.

Building on the writing of nineteenth-century thinkers such as Julius Langbehn, Paul de Lagarde, and Richard Wagner, Nazi theorists depicted Jews as cunning and clever but lacking in depth, feeling, and the creative spirit (Langbehn 1890, Lagarde 1880, Wagner 1888). Consumed by greed, materialism, and lustful sensuality, they were a threat to the purity of the German race, its character and its womanhood. Jews lacked any true national feeling and had no sense of the land or its heritage.

In this distorted Nazi view, Jews were polluting German society through speculation, media manipulation, seduction, and treachery. This virulent and baseless stereotype of the Jew was most crudely represented by the violent and pornographic caricatures in Julius Streicher's Nazi tabloid *Der Stürmer*. Cartoons depicted the fat, long-nosed Jew, money stuffed in his pockets waiting in the shadows to attack the young, innocent, and racially pure Aryan girl dressed in white and wearing a cross. It is not surprising that believers in this characterization of the Jew created by perverted Nazi propagandists could find animals more attractive than such humans.

The other major strand of Nazi thought depicted the Jew as a distinctly different and alien type of organism. Scientists, particularly those who studied anthropology and animal behavior, provided fuel for this strain of Nazi thought and added to a sense of confusion about distinctions between animals and people. Konrad Lorenz (1939), who supported the Nazi emphasis on biology, compared species behavior and found human beings wanting in that they were capable of uniquely deadly behavior toward members of their own species. Racial biologists, racial anthropologists, and racial hygienists created hierarchies of human subspecies which defined such great differences within the human

species that it is not surprising that animals could have seemed superior to some human beings. In the period before World War I, these racial anthropologists and biologists collected samples of skulls and other body parts of Herero and Hottentot people who had been killed as the result of the suppression of an uprising against colonial authorities in German Southwest Africa. These skulls were used to demonstrate the inferiority of the African tribesmen, who were considered to be a lower order of human being.

In the 1930s, Ottmar von Verschuer was in the forefront of racial anthropology and headed laboratories first in Frankfurt and then in Berlin. He continued the research that had begun using the skulls of Africans. During the period from 1942 to 1945, he received skulls and other body parts sent to him by his former research assistant Josef Mengele. Mengele had been trained as a medical doctor and as a racial anthropologist. The samples sent by Mengele from Auschwitz served to support research designed to prove the fundamental inferiority of Jews and Gypsies.

Mengele made life and death selections at the arrival ramps and oversaw medical experiments at Auschwitz. He worked in a moral atmosphere where human beings and their body parts had less value and were more readily available than those of animals. SS medical personnel in the camps cut quantities of flesh from the corpses of murdered Jews to use as a medium for growing cultures for medical experiments because it was cheaper and more readily available than animal flesh. The SS officers preferred to use animal flesh as meat to be eaten and to use human flesh for medical experimentation. In the perverted moral atmosphere of Nazism and the camps, this procedure made a kind of bizarre sense. As Robert Jay Lifton (1986) characterizes this thinking, "In

Auschwitz, then, human flesh was more expendable than valuable animal meat; using it could seem an acceptable, even 'sensible,' expression of Auschwitz 'medical science.' "The intertwining of the valuing of humans and animals and the analogies of the camps to stockyards and farms had one of its most ghastly manifestations at Majdanek, where on a particular day in November of 1943, the SS murdered 18,000 prisoners and called the process the "harvest festival" (Gilbert 1988).

The relationship of Nazi Animal Protection Legislation to ideas about crime and guilt provides insight into the working of the legal system under the Nazi state and the redefinition of legal theory and practice that took place during these years. The key figure in recasting basic concepts of legal theory and reorienting the legal profession in conformity with Nazi values was Carl Schmitt. Schmitt, a legal theorist, political philosopher, and constitutional lawyer, edited the prestigious legal journal *Deutsche Juristenzeitung* and was charged by Hermann Göring and Hans Frank, chief Nazi jurist, with reeducating the judges and lawyers to conform to Nazi ideas (Bookbinder 1991). One of Schmitt's major contributions was to recast ideas about guilt and punishment.

Schmitt argued that guilt was a legal concept that resulted from an individual or group damaging something that was of value to society. The greater the value of what was damaged, the greater the guilt that resulted. This fundamental concept and its ramifications can be seen by examining "damage" done to German society by Jews, damage done to Jews, and damage done to animals. The highest value for the Nazis was the existence of a racially pure homogeneous society. Jews had, in Nazi terms, always plotted to destroy the purity and homogeneity of German society and thus had damaged that which was of

the greatest value to the Nazis, therefore incurring the maximum guilt. By their very existence, Jews threatened and damaged racially pure German society. Thus, in addition to all their other offenses, the Jews were guilty of the "crime of being."

The logical culmination of this analysis, not devised by Schmitt himself, was that the only way to deal with the Jews' "crime of being" was to have them no longer be. Other Nazis had no trouble reaching this conclusion. Since Jews were of only negative value to German society as defined by the Nazis, nothing done to them could generate guilt. The legal system had no basis for defining any act directed against Jews as a crime or for offering Jews any protection. However, animals were of value to German society, and they were prized by many of the molders of opinion within Nazi Germany. Therefore actions that damaged animals did create guilt, and individuals who violated Animal Protection Legislation could be severely punished.

One of the strangest aspects of the success of National Socialism in Germany is the nature of the men who were the leaders of the movement. Adolf Hitler, Hermann Göring, Joseph Goebbels, Heinrich Himmler, and many of the other senior leaders were individuals with deep personality disorders who had a great deal of trouble relating to their fellow human beings. These individuals reveled in the domination of others and demanded unquestioning loyalty from those around them. They were not able to relate to other people as equals. Göring, Goebbels, and Himmler had contempt for almost all individuals with the exception of family members, whose position was clearly subservient, and Adolf Hitler, whom they revered as a semi-deity. For these people, animals, either as pets or in the wild, could be more appealing. Goebbels' pet dog, who was



always glad to see him, totally loyal, and expected little from him, was the type of being to whom a psychological misfit like Goebbels could relate. The stag that Göring could hunt, who would face him in an honest pitting of wits, strength, and skill in a contest Göring knew he would win, was a creature that Göring preferred to his fellow human beings. Adolf Hitler, who had almost no friends in his lifetime and either no or perverted sexual relations with a few women, also found it easier to relate more openly to his dogs.

Thus the Nazi leaders, with their abnormal personal qualities and strange relations to other human beings, developed an ideology that divided the world into friends and enemies, good and evil, humans, and subhumans. They also developed a system that contained both extensive animal protection laws and a mass murder program for Jews. The Animal Protection Program did indeed reflect the proclivities of its leaders, did develop under a legal system that blurred the value of humans and animals, and did result from Nazi abolition of the moral distinctions between people and animals.

## **THE NAZI POSTURE TOWARD ANIMALS: A COMMENT ON ARLUKE AND SAX**

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The article "Understanding Nazi Animal Protection and the Holocaust" by Arnold Arluke and Boria Sax is a fascinating exposition. It is rich in detail, superb in its documentation, and beautifully crafted. The basic question raised by the article is, indeed, quite compelling. How can we

account for the apparent inconsistency of Nazi brutality to many humans and their seemingly humane care and protection of animals? The various explanations and analyses advanced by Arluke and Sax are insightful and well developed. It is relatively easy to accept some of the premises advanced by the authors but others raise questions.

Arluke and Sax offer three general explanations for the incongruence of Nazi concern for animals and inhumanity to some peoples. There would appear to be merit in all three. Clearly, their personal or psychological explanation has significant validity. Many of the Nazi political leaders (and to a lesser degree some of the military leaders) were, indeed, "odd." They had a history of social marginality and alienation—social misfits, as it were. Individuals who are not socially accepted frequently develop sociopathic tendencies as a result of their alienation, and are often not able to form truly intimate, interpersonal relationships with other humans. Such relationships are usually instrumental rather than affective or expressive and others are tolerated because they are useful. Many of the infamous villains of history were social misfits. Perhaps, not surprisingly, such individuals may develop strong attachments to a nonhuman, significant other, such as a dog or a horse. Robert Stroud, the "Birdman of Alcatraz," for example, was reportedly antisocial during his many years in prison, even to other inmates, but fixated on his canaries (when he was permitted to have them). Hitler and other Nazis may simply have disliked people but felt an affinity for their pets (and, by extension, animals in general). But, of course, animal lovers are not necessarily "anti-people."

As regards the second explanation, it is obvious that the Nazi efforts to protect animals served, in some instances, as a

means by which to castigate and persecute Jews, for example, for kosher butchering. I am not persuaded, however, that this was all part of a well-defined and orchestrated master plan. Such an assumption would attribute too much logical rationality to the Nazis. Nazi political ideology was a convoluted, "ragbag" of odds and ends, ranging from astrology to Machiavellian strategy, to pseudoscientific fantasy, to the skillful exploitation of public disaffection. As the authors point out, Nazi (and, indeed, German) cultural ideology contains more than a soupçon of myth, fantasy, and intellectual chimera. It is easier to believe that the Nazi animal protection efforts were more a kind of ideological "mutation" than a concerted plan. In effect, it fell into place piecemeal, and in doing so, provided an opportune structure for attacking various segments of society, including Jews and elements of the "establishment," such as scientists, physicians, academicians, and others who represented the status quo. In the process of replacing an existing government, it is very utilitarian to discredit the prevailing way of doing things—to seek change for the "good of society," so to speak. Political control often rests on the principle of reordering existing norms. The Nazis sought to assume total control by drastically altering traditional norms. Sanctioning a more humane societal posture toward animals was simply a part of a larger drive to construct a new political reality. Henceforth, the government would control everything!

There was a long history of antivivisectionism in Europe and in Great Britain. By banning vivisection and kosher slaughtering and passing other "anti-cruelty" legislation, the Nazis were more likely trying to project a strong image of getting society "straightened out" than implementing genuine ideological concern (perhaps except in the minds of a few

of the top leaders, such as Hitler himself). Likewise, by enacting more stringent and directed hunting laws, the Nazis' motivation should probably be viewed more as an effort to portray a constructive, "enlightened," and expeditious appearance, rather than a manifestation of compassion. Although Göring strove to convert his hunting estate in East Prussia into a model game preserve, he could hardly be considered as a true conservationist. Like the British, the German national character has historically had a penchant for orderliness, and all of the animal laws may have represented something of a desire to "tidy things up," as it were. Finally, in the same vein as the critic who recently defined a liberal as "someone who approves of almost any behavior, as long as it is compulsory," much Nazi legislation should perhaps be viewed as a desire to make people conform, regardless of the norm.

The third explanation is especially compelling. If the Nazis could define everyone as an animal, and then assign some people to a category lower than real animals on the creature continuum, then it would be possible to view such peoples as lower animals and any treatment of them could be justified. The labeling of Jews as vermin, rats, bacteria, and insects (as described by the authors) would certainly seem to support this supposition. It is particularly convincing in view of the fact that the United States employed essentially the same strategy in World War II. John Dower, in his book *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (1986) speaks at length of the frequent American reference to the Japanese as "rats" and "rodents." (Marines, for example, sometimes went into battle with the label "Rodent Exterminator" stenciled on their helmets). Such metaphors were not restricted to the military context, but were often encountered in civilian settings. The governor of

Idaho is reported to have said of the Japanese American internees "...a good solution to the Jap problem would be to send them all back to Japan, then sink the island. They live like rats, breed like rats and act like rats" (Dower 1986:92). By conceptualizing the Japanese as "rats," the use of weapons such as napalm, fire bombs, flamethrowers, and, of course, the atomic bomb was more easily justified (and so too was the internment of Japanese American civilians). Americans were just as adept at manipulating animal symbols as were Nazis.

Arluke and Sax have provided us with a most provocative essay. There is much to be learned from it and new insights to be gleaned with each successive rereading. The authors, however, at least by implication, seem to suggest that the "paradox" of brutalizing humans and idolizing animals was unique to the Nazis, and the monstrous crimes committed in the Nazi era constituted a singular national aberration. Their discussion also appears to imply that there is supposed to be some type of consistency or congruence between a societal posture toward and the treatment of animals and humans. Such congruence is not always evident in the cultural inventory of many societies. In some Asian societies, for instance, the treatment of animals often shocks and traumatizes Westerners and yet the same Asians affect great civility in their interaction with other humans and they frequently display inordinate tenderness and affection in their treatment of children and the elderly.

The Germans in the Nazi Era perpetrated some horrible atrocities, with the Holocaust being the most monstrous. So, too, have many so-called "civilized" nations, including the United States. Some writers (Bryant 1979, for example) have asserted that in some extreme circumstances such as war, "normal" people are

capable of visiting hideous brutalities on their fellow mankind. In reviewing American history, one cannot help but note that in various "Indian Wars" the military (and civilians as well) cheerfully engaged in the extermination of Indian men, women, and children, such as at Wounded Knee. In the American Civil War, both sides subjected prisoners of war to conditions little better than those at Nazi concentration camps (see, for example, Kantor 1955). In the Philippine Insurrection, the American military routinely committed atrocities, including the torture of captured enemy troops, and the murder and rape of civilians (Miller 1970:219). Even Mark Twain was aroused by the brutality the U.S. displayed in the Philippines and spoke out against it (Twain 1992). In World War II, Americans committed all sorts of brutal acts, ranging from machine gunning enemy troops in the water after sinking their ships (Toland 1971:667–68) to bayoneting prisoners (Toland 1959:338). Viet Nam has more than its share of "horror stories" committed by Americans, including the My Lai 4 "massacre" (see Hersh 1970, 1972). In all such instances, the Americans involved in the atrocities were presumably (and reported to be) quite typical individuals who likely had pets back home and probably were as kind to cats and dogs as to children, people with disabilities, and the elderly.

Nor are atrocities and brutal behavior confined to members of the military in wartime. There is ample evidence of such behavior, for example, among Americans in many situational contexts. There are many "horror stories" concerning the treatment of some persons who are arrested, the abuse of some convicts by both correctional officials and other inmates, the use of convicts for medical experiments and drug testing, and the mistreatment of some mental patients. As far as systematic

mistreatment, the instance of the infamous Tuskegee syphilis research is sufficiently chilling.

Although the Nazi era is quite singular in the breadth and depth of its brutality and inhumanity, here in America we have a sufficiently enigmatic paradox in regard to inconsistency of our posture toward humans and companion animals. Ours is a society that spends more money on dog food than baby food (six times as much). At a time when many homeless Americans are lucky to find food at a soup kitchen, our dogs and cats eat as much food as can be carried in a freight train 12 miles long *each day* (see Djerassi, Israel, and Jochle 1973). In this society, we have dog cemeteries, stores that sell dog products including clothing and toys, summer camps for dogs, dog restaurants, dog motels, and also extensive human unemployment and poverty. We tolerate dog “litter” (3,500 tons of feces and 36 million liters of urine daily) (Djerassi, Israel, and Jochle 1973) and hundreds of thousands of dog bites and attacks each year (38,000 in New York alone) including some that result in serious injury and sometimes death. We deplore the euthanization of dogs and cats in animal shelters, but enthusiastically proceed with capital punishment for humans in many states. The country is now agonizing over the fact that we are not able to provide proper medical care or coverage for a significant proportion of our human population, but we take pride in the fact that we have excellent health care for animals generally speaking, and arguably much of our animal health care system is oriented toward companion animals.

The Nazi human—animal paradox is intriguing, but we might well profitably explore the contrasting behavior in regard to animals and humans in many cultural settings. In the final analysis, if we are to comprehend fully the human—animal in-

terface in all of its vagaries, we must scrutinize the anomalies as well as the commonplace. Arluke and Sax’s essay is a splendid step in this direction.

## COMMENTS ON ARLUKE/SAX ARTICLE

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Professors Arluke and Sax have done a great service in their article, and little additional comment is required. Let me take the liberty of providing one or two minor points.

The Leni Riefenstahl *Triumph of the Will*, the remarkable propaganda film that chronicles the 1934 Nazi Party Congress in Nürnberg, is alleged to have “superimposed images of rats over presumed ‘degenerate people’ such as the Jews.” Although this film exists in versions ranging from forty minutes to six hours, none that I have viewed ever depicted such a scene. In fact, since this film was intended for export, Riefenstahl and her mentor Josef Goebbels were very careful to mute any potential worldwide negative response to Nazi anti-Semitism. Only Julius Streicher, the bullet-headed fanatic, was permitted one brief observation when he commented in a speech, “Any nation which does not maintain purity of blood will be destroyed.” Other than that, Riefenstahl was careful to avoid negative images of racially inferior groups.

Heinrich Himmler fully expected to populate the occupied lands to the east of Germany with blond-haired, blue-eyed products from his racial breeding farms. He called this program *Lebensborn*, “Spring of Life,” but contrary to his beliefs in racial purity, he was prepared to accept the blue-eyed, blond-haired children of

murdered Jews as appropriate racial stock. Such children were taken away from parents who were doomed, and after the war, many were completely unaware of their racial origins or their Jewish past. Such was the madness of Nazi racial doctrine.

## THOUGHTS ON THE NAZI ANIMAL PROTECTION MOVEMENT

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At the end of a concert or play, the audience applauds and may even rise to honor the performers with a standing ovation. At a stunning performance, however, the audience just sits for a while, silent. The description and interpretation of the Nazi animal protection movement by Arluke and Sax left me sitting silently.

The authors call needed attention to a perplexing yet little-known episode in the history of our relationships with other species. Curiously, while Arluke and Sax correctly indicate that there are far-reaching ethical implications to the apparently widespread interest in the welfare of animals among ranking Nazi political and military leaders, they largely decline to reveal what they consider to be the moral of this twisted tale. Here I discuss two of many thoughts that came to mind as I read and reread this article.

My first thought concerns the general role of logic in human affairs. In the preface to the script of the play *Equus*, the author, Peter Shaffer, relates the event that led him to write the play. On a casual drive through the English countryside, a friend described to Shaffer a true and bizarre event. A 14-year-old boy who worked in a local stable had, for no apparent reason,

plunged a metal spike into the eyes of six racehorses, blinding them. In the play, the author creates a dramatic world in which this horrific deed takes on meaning. By the time the curtain falls, the audience comes to understand the reasoning behind an act that initially defies comprehension.

Arluke and Sax undertake much the same endeavor in their account of the attitudes toward the treatment of animals in Hitler's Germany. The very existence of a society in which government bureaucrats are concerned with the suffering of lobsters destined for restaurant stew pots but not the systematic torture, enslavement, and murder of millions of human beings seems an incomprehensible paradox. The authors, however, argue that the paradox is more apparent than real, and that once we understand the intellectual *zeitgeist* of mid-20th-century German culture, Hitler's moral vegetarianism and Göring's antivivisectionist sentiments do not really seem so strange.

I disagree with the contention that the Nazi animal protection paradox vanishes if we only understand its historical and philosophical roots. Moral inconsistency is the hallmark of our relations with other species. Examples are easy to come by. Many animal advocates (some of whom are vegetarians) keep cats for companions. But while they may profess love for all creatures great and small, their cats (obligate carnivores) are directly responsible for the deaths of many millions of small birds and mammals each year (Herzog 1991). Inconsistencies are also found among those on the other side of the animal protection debate. Rollin (1989) describes the irony of scientists who come home to beloved canine companions after having spent the day conducting painful experiments on dogs in their laboratory.

Despite the claims of the authors, the paradox of Nazi animal rights sympathies does not fade when the underlying logic is



examined. Rather, Nazi animal protection is the ultimate paradox—one that results not from the unique insanity of a particular place and time but from the convoluted milieu of preference and prejudice, emotion and logic that generally characterizes human interactions with other species. What this article tells us about is not what Gould (1992) recently referred to as the “byzantine taxonomy” of German science and culture. What it tells us about is ourselves.

My second thought concerns the relationship between the Nazi animal protectionism and the modern animal liberation movement. Here we tread on shaky ground. Animal rights activists often draw analogies between the treatment of animals in biomedical research facilities and factory farms and the treatment of Jews in medical experiments and concentration camps. The existence of a widespread and sincere animal protection movement in Nazi Germany is potentially embarrassing to animal advocates who frequently describe with admiration the vegetarianism of Gandhi but rarely allude to Adolf Hitler’s culinary preferences. Indeed, some animal advocates have explicitly distanced themselves from the Nazi animal movement by claiming that Hitler was not *really* a vegetarian after all, as though Hitler’s dietary preference tarnishes the moral superiority of a meatless lifestyle (Clifton 1990).

Biomedical research advocates have tried to smear the modern animal protection movement by drawing attention to parallels between the rhetoric of Nazi animal lovers and current movement leaders (Horton 1988; see also Jasper and Nelkin 1992). In reality there is little relationship between the Nazi animal protection movement and the modern animal liberation movement. Comparing Hitler’s love of animals with the rise of interest in animal

welfare in the 1980s is as logical as pointing out that both cigarette smokers and carrot eaters usually die. There is, however, another point to consider in this context. Some philosophers and animal activists contend that the inclusion of animals into the sphere of moral concern is a logical and inevitable manifestation of the processes that led in succession to the elimination of slavery, the enfranchisement of women, and the recognition that discrimination based on sexual orientation is morally wrong. For example, Singer (1975, 1981) has argued that human history is characterized by moral progress. He views the history of ethics as an “expanding circle” in which there is an ever widening sphere of whose and what’s interest we need to consider when making decisions that have moral consequences.

This view of morality is reminiscent of the widely known theory of human motivation developed by the late Abraham Maslow, who conceived of human psychology as the struggle to confront a “hierarchy of needs.” At the lowest level are basic physiological needs such as the need for food, sleep, and water. At the highest level is the need to achieve a semimystical state he referred to as self-actualization. The hierarchical nature of the theory implied that a series of lower-level needs must be met before an individual is able to move on to the higher levels. The concept of the hierarchy of needs is undermined, however, by the existence of people who appear to work to satisfy higher-level needs at the expense of basic motivational states (e.g., starving artists, martyrs, hunger strikers, etc.).

The Nazi animal protection movement raises similar problems for those who hold that current interest in animal liberation is the natural consequence of an expanding circle of morality. Certainly, the Nazis’ attitudes toward the treatment of animals did

not develop as an outgrowth of their concern for human rights. In some cases, social and individual concern for other species does emerge as the next step of a developing conscience. In other cases, however, concern for the welfare of animals arises quite independently of concern for oppressed people. Indeed, as in the case of the Nazis, apparent moral concern for animals can be a manifestation of underlying pathology. Note that this line of reasoning in no way undermines the logic of Singer's utilitarian-based argument for animal liberation. That the Nazis could profess an apparently genuine respect for nonhuman species while they were committing genocide should, however, give pause to those who hold that conversion to an animal liberation perspective necessarily represents a quantum advance in moral development.

## EPITHETS OF EVIL IN CONTEMPORARY POLITICS

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In political debates we try to clinch arguments by deploying "god terms" that cannot be questioned. God itself is the eponymous example, but "rights," "Nature," and "market forces" have also been used to demand assent and close off debate. These rhetorical terms of unassailable allegiance have negative counterparts: terms of unquestionable evil. Today, the most persistent "evil terms" include "Nazis," "fascist," and "Holocaust." In the animal rights controversy, extremists on both sides use shrill rhetoric to portray themselves as good and their enemies as evil; how better to do this than to link one's foe with Nazi brutality? Animal activists paint swastikas on labora-

tory walls because they believe that vivisection is a "Holocaust" for animals; scientists regularly respond that such activists are "fascist" in their sweeping demands.

Arnold Arluke and Boria Sax will probably not end such deeply embedded rhetorical references with their recent article. But they should. The occasional epithet notwithstanding, both scientists and animal protectionists should think twice about serious attempts to associate their adversaries with Nazi practices.

By describing the complexity of Nazi animal protection, and by placing it in the context of other beliefs about animals and about Jews common in early 20th-century Germany, Arluke and Sax cast doubt on parallels between the Nazis and the contemporary animal protection movement. Efforts to elevate the status of animals do not necessarily lead to brutalization of humans, nor do they necessarily prevent it. In Nazi Germany, where medical research was associated with Jews, where an image of Nature as noble and pure was used to criticize instrumental rationality, and where the purity of blood and gene pools was an obsession, antivivisection was part of the scapegoating of Jews. Critiques of instrumental attitudes on the grounds that they reduce humans and other beings to the status of tools can come from the Right or the Left. The Nazis developed a largely rightwing version, despite an occasionally populist tone. Contemporary animal rights activists, in contrast, deploy a primarily liberal or leftwing critique, despite frequent rhetoric of intolerance.

In today's controversy, animal protection lacks the precise symbolic connections with anti-Semitism that the Nazis exploited. But are there other connections? Some observers claim to detect anti-Semitism in the American animal rights

movement. They do not have clear evidence, only statements subject to interpretation. Do anti-fur protestors decry “Beverly Hills furriers” because that neighborhood is associated with the wealthy or because it is associated with Jews? Are attacks on kosher slaughter and the Judaeo-Christian tradition of “Man’s dominion” entirely innocent? The swastika left by the Animal Liberation Front at Loma Linda University—was it intended as an affront to Jewish researchers or was it meant to associate animal research with barbaric Nazi practices? Are perceptions of anti-Semitism in these incidents examples of oversensitivity, or are they perceptive observations of feelings that activists are smart enough to hide in their public statements?

No definitive answers are possible. Both Jews and non-Jews participate in the animal protection movement. It is primarily Jews in the movement who have attacked kosher slaughter laws. The movement certainly does not attract skinheads, Aryan Brothers, or others quick to seize an opportunity to bash those unlike themselves. Instead of trying to probe the hearts of activists, however, we can ask why the political style of the movement might give impressions of anti-Semitism. In doing so, I draw on research that Dorothy Nelkin and I conducted for our book *The Animal Rights Crusade* (1992).

Those engaged in a moral crusade, who believe they alone have the truth, who feel a sense of urgency in their message, often develop a self-righteous arrogance and a shrill tone in their rhetoric. Like the prophets of the Old Testament, they can exhibit a single-minded obsession with their cause, which encourages them to step outside the normal channels of politics, breaking the laws because of the moral urgency of their goals. Certain more ex-

treme groups and individuals in the animal rights movement—one thinks of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals and the Animal Liberation Front—seem to fit this description.

The overriding importance of one issue—helping animals—often crowds out other political concerns in the animal rights movement. Internal democracy and debate are often curtailed in the interests of the animals. Women’s equality and participation are also a distraction, so no effort need be made to place women in leadership positions in proportion to their membership in the movement (which is much higher than men’s). Latin American and Asian immigrants often bring with them attitudes and practices not conducive to animals’ well-being, so they are attacked even at the cost of stoking xenophobia. Similarly, if many furriers are Jewish, too bad. If ritual Jewish practices—although this is debated—appear cruel, they too must be attacked. Saving animals always comes first.

The horrors of the Inquisition do not render Catholicism invalid, but they should inspire serious soul searching on the part of thoughtful Christians. True believers, whether Catholics or animal activists, are often willing to break the rules of public discourse and politics, and they offend many in doing so. Some of them may appear anti-Semitic on rare occasions, but they also occasionally appear sexist, xenophobic, or racist, depending on their current target. Virtually all of the members of the movement would deny being any of these, but their rhetoric continues to catch in the throats of outsiders who do not share their urgent concern for improving the lot of animals.

Glib references to the Nazis—used by both sides in the animal rights controversy—only discourage public discussion

of how society should treat animals, as moralistic accusations of evil curtail communication and preclude negotiation. Arluke and Sax's review of Nazi antivivisectionism should discourage the use of this particular red herring, but it is still up to reasonable people on both sides to sit down and discuss the treatment of animals.

## NAZIS AND ANIMAL PROTECTION

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Boria Sax was kind enough to send me an early version of the article "Understanding Nazi Animal Protection and The Holocaust" (Arluke and Sax 1992). I have already informed him that there is no evidence that the Nazis restrained their practice of vivisection, regardless of their alleged "antivivisection" laws, and I note that the authors included a word of caution with respect to actual Nazi vivisection practice. But more than a word is necessary. The Nazi "antivivisection" laws were so general that *The Lancet*, in reviewing them, wrote that antivivisectionists had no reason to celebrate. These laws allowed for the usual loophole by stating that "necessary" vivisection would continue. Hermann Göring declared in his broadcast speech of August 28, 1933, that:

It will and must be, the tasks of the experts to state individual cases and to decide how far it will be necessary, if at all, to experiment on animals in order to advance the knowledge of disease in humans, to produce medicines, and generally to further scientific knowledge.

His speech then delineates the numerous opportunities available for vivisection. Nazi medicine was wedded to allotropic medicine, which is rooted in animal research. The Nazis persecuted homeopathic doctors and virtually all of them were in exile by 1939. Had the Nazis been serious about abolishing vivisection, they would not have made homeopathic practice—an original German development—illegal.

A serious problem with Arluke's and Sax's article is that the authors attempt to establish a causal connection between the Nazis' purported fondness for animals and the Holocaust and/or their hatred for human beings in general. They argue by establishing correlations, which they hope will be accepted as causation. The paper is a collection of contradictions, surmises, and innuendoes. For example, Jews, we are told, were considered by Wagner and the Nazis to be "ape-like" or on a level with apes, while the Nazis' admiration for animals was restricted to the "higher animals." What rung on the ladder do the apes represent if the Jews are the lowest among human beings in the Nazis' classificatory system? Were the apes then the lowest? This hardly bespeaks a scientific knowledge of animals! We are told on page 8, that the purpose of the Law for the Protection of Animals was "to awaken and strengthen compassion as one of the highest moral values of the German people." On page 10, we are told that "Hitler emphasized that the new German should emulate certain animal behaviors such as "...strength, fearlessness, aggressiveness, and even cruelty found in beasts of prey, qualities that were among the movement's most stringent principles."

In fact, the latter view of the animal world suited the German ethos, based as it was in social Darwinism and a view of

nature as predatory and cruel. T.H.Huxley, in spite of his advocacy of Darwinism, expressed concern that Darwinism was a dangerous social ethos and hoped that it would stay confined to the parameters of natural evolution. Nazism fulfilled his worst fears. Nazi ideology is rooted in social Darwinism, 19th-century science, which was undisguisedly racist and sexist, 19th-century exploration of animal breeding (see Ritvo 1987), old-fashioned anti-Semitism, and romanticism about the “noble savage,” or “pure natural type.” This included a celebration of “wild nature,” which has been a part of European literary tradition since the discovery of the Americas and the advent of the industrial age with its concomitant alienation from nature and community.

A view of human beings as “ignoble” and of animals as “noble” is an old literary tradition, spanning folklore, beast fables, proverbs, etc. Here is a classical example from Walt Whitman:

I think I could turn and live with animals, they  
are so placid and self-contain'd,  
I stand and look at them long and long.

They do not sweat and whine about their condition,  
They do not lie awake in the dark and weep  
for their sins,  
They do not make me sick discussing their  
duty to God....

The Nazi state, however, was also committed to modernism, technology, and science. These contradictory elements are explored in Jeffrey Herf's book about Nazi Germany (Herf 1984).

Animal protection laws played a shaky and contradictory role in this heated ideological melange. There are plenty of examples of Nazi cruelty toward animals, including gladiatorial combat, and the use of baboons (higher animals?) for typhus

experiments. Hunting per se is not criticized, only “effeminate” hunting for money or with improper weapons. If concern for animals, or a tradition of animal protection laws, leads to alienation from human beings or to anti-Semitism, the Jainists should be very dangerous people. They have the oldest tradition of concern for animals. But the Jainist tradition rests on the value of ahimsa (nonviolence), while the Nazi tradition of interest in animal life rested on the opposite of ahimsa: social Darwinism and the perception of survival of the fittest as a corollary of predatory behavior.

The passage of anti-shechitah (against kosher butchering) laws in Nazi Germany was preceded by similar laws in the Scandinavian countries and in Switzerland. In many of these instances, anti-Semitism masqueraded as a concern for animals and, unfortunately, still often does. (The forthcoming anthology, *Judaism and Animal Rights: Classical and Contemporary Responses* [Kalechofsky 1991] has several articles that explore this problem.) The point here, however, is that other countries that passed anti-schechitah laws as disguised forms of anti-Semitism did not become Nazi states, nor did their anti-Semitism go much beyond these outbursts.

As for Hitler's vegetarianism, no one denies that he flirted with it and practiced it from time to time for health reasons, but there is plenty of evidence that he frequently ate meat. If he seriously connected vegetarianism with health, he had the opportunity to state so in *Mein Kampf*, in passages about his concern for strength, health, and virility. He was also a teetotaler and against smoking, but these characteristics ignite few surmises.

Anti-Semitism can be and has been embedded, or encoded, into virtually every western ideology or tradition. The fact



that Jews are accused of opposite things: of being capitalists and communists, clannish and cosmopolites, and that it often flourishes where there are no Jews, underscores the irrationality and adaptability of anti-Semitism. Two works, the classical study by James Parkes (1934) and the more recent study by Gavin Langmuir (1990), support the thesis of anti-Semitism as a pathology peculiar to Christianity and as a free-floating *weltanschauung* throughout western culture. To conclude an article entitled "Nazi Animal Protection and The Holocaust" with the statement that "The Holocaust itself may have depended on this unique cultural conception of what it meant to be human in relation to animals"—to suggest that the Holocaust "may be" related to Hitler's or other Nazis' fondness for their dogs or concern for how lobsters and crabs are boiled alive—trivializes this millenniaally entrenched, complex pathology and its varieties of expression throughout the centuries. The dream of a *Judenrein* Europe was not Hitler's alone. That dream began in the 11th century!

## RESPONSE TO ARLUKE AND SAX

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The subject of this analysis is macabre: laws for the protection of animals coupled with brutality toward fellow human beings, brutality taken to the extreme of genocide. Sax and Arluke attempt to resolve this apparently absurd paradox through examination of relevant historical events and intellectual trends in Germany during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Geographic and temporal distance, it

seems, enables the authors to present a largely dispassionate analysis, of a sort that may only be possible for the new generation in Germany.

The distinction between Germans and the Nazi government is noteworthy, and this is not universally taken for granted. The curse of Nazi ideology hovers over the German people like a filthy film of oil over water, destroying and poisoning many things. Used shrewdly during the Nazi rise to power, it was able to penetrate the German public, deeply concealed by the abiding dreams and fears of nationalists, the unemployed, anti-Semites, lovers of nature, and animal protectionists. Nevertheless, as the intentions of the movement became increasingly clear (Roehm Purge, 1934; Crystal Night, 1938; the start of World War II, 1939), it also became apparent that Naziism could not easily be institutionalized. Just as the stable division of oil over water cannot be accomplished without an emulsion, so, as those in power recognized, continuous propaganda was not enough to establish Naziism among the people. To accomplish that goal required something more forceful. The rulers saw such a means in the rise of an appropriately indoctrinated youth and, in the long run, the eugenic breeding of a "new" man. This eugenic intention, which could not be realized, bore a closer relation to the laws on breeding of animals than to the laws on animal protection.

This attempt by Arluke and Sax to explain the Nazi protection of animals is, in any case, stimulating, if not necessarily convincing on every point. The animal protection laws certainly had a political orientation. They were meant to affect not only animals but also the so-called enemies of the people: Jews, Gypsies, and others. The Nazis had already begun to prepare these laws before taking power. In 1927, Dr. Frick, a Nazi representative to

the Reichstag and later Minister of the Interior, called for measures against cruelty to animals and against kosher butchering. In 1932, members of the Nazi party proposed a ban on vivisection (Schröder 1970). It is still unclear whether the animal protection laws of November 1933 had already been drafted before the Nazis took power (Brumme 1981, Schröder 1970), but there are many indications that they were working on such laws. It is also possible that an accidental circumstance contributed to the rapid actualization of these laws, as well as to the laws of April 1933 regulating butchering. This was the personal acquaintance of Hitler with a veterinarian, Dr. F. Weber, an "old warrior" who had taken part in the attempted "beerhall coup" in Munich of November 1923 and who had later sat with Hitler in Landsberg prison. Weber was known, among other things, as an opponent of kosher butchering. Hitler had conversed with him about questions of butchering and animal protection (Brumme 1991).

A further and, in my opinion, more important reason for the rapid passage of the animal protection laws, which Sax and Arluke only touch on, is the more opportunistic attempt to conceal the Nazi's true (criminal) orientation. The Nazis, apparently, wished to demonstrate humanitarian intentions, not only to Germans but to foreigners as well, just as they had during the 1933 Olympic games. With the animal protection laws of November 1933, the Nazis could be sure of sympathy from many sectors of the population. Animal protection, environmentalism, anti-vivisection, and the movement against kosher butchering all had a long tradition in Germany, and the animal protection laws of 1933 brought nothing but acclaim. These laws were highly regarded abroad as well, for example, at the international confer-

ence for animal protection in Paris in 1933 (Hahn 1980).

In this connection, it is important to remember that in 1933 the Nazi hold on power was not yet sufficiently secure for the rulers to let the mask fall. They first had to consolidate their power. The most certain way to accomplish this was through obtaining spontaneous, unequivocal acclaim in broad segments of the population. The animal protection laws of November 1933 gave them an excellent opportunity to pursue their political agendas, even if covertly, as well as to win widespread respect, thus obtaining a favorable public image.

A further reason that Arluke and Sax give for the rapid actualization of the animal protection laws of November 1933 is the personal attitude of many Nazis to animals. This may have played a role, but only within limits. In this regard, the primary emphasis must be placed on the attitudes of Hitler, less on those of others. Dönitz was, at the time, still without political influence, and the power of Himmler was, in 1933, still modest.

We should also distinguish between the relation of Nazis to individual animals or people on the one hand and to anonymous masses of animals or people on the other. The relationship of many Nazi leaders to individual animals that were close to them may, indeed, have been very loving and protective. But this did not prevent cold-blooded deeds with respect to an anonymous mass of animals, when circumstances dictated. This is illustrated not only by the example of several experiments on animals, as Sax and Arluke mentioned, but other events as well. When, for example, the German army under Hitler's direction was ordered to abandon the half-island of Krim on May 8, 1944, all of the horses had to be killed so they would not fall into the

hands of the Russians. About 30,000 animals were destroyed. It was probably the greatest massacre of horses in history (Piekalkiewicz 1976).

The attitude of the Nazis in relation to human beings was similar. Hitler did not, in contrast to Stalin and Saddam Hussein, engage in any acts of brutality toward his ministers or others close to him, apart from the Roehm Purge. Toward his closest colleagues he was, on the contrary, often conciliatory and he is not known to have been present at any atrocities. Himmler went into shock on viewing the execution of Jews in Minsk (Bullock 1991). Like their relation to human beings, the Nazis' relation to animals was that of armchair activists.

The third of the explanations given by Arluke and Sax is that human beings and animals should, through the animal protection of the Nazis, be placed on the same level, in order that human beings be treated as animals. This seems somewhat tortured. As the authors correctly ascertain, the Nazis were no friends of intellectual theories in justification of their ideology. Given their tactics and their legal understanding, it is not likely that they would use animal protection indirectly as an alibi for their brutalities. They were sufficiently unscrupulous to realize their cruel purposes directly, without equivocation and without special preparation, when the opportunity arose (Crystal Night, 1938). Given their pragmatism, it is also questionable whether, in 1933, they already had clear plans for a comprehensive Holocaust.

For all of the brutality with which the Nazis expressed their contempt for humanity, at the special cost to such groups as Jews and Gypsies, a direct connection to animal protection cannot be ascertained. If man and animal are placed on

the same level, but the animal is protected from cruelty, this protection should also apply to human beings, even when they are degraded to the status of animals. But the attitude toward these groups of people was much worse than the attitudes toward animals. The laws on animal protection and the Holocaust had the same authorship. But the Holocaust remains a unique anomaly that probably transcends any rational explanation.

Kant stated that cruelty to animals brutalizes human beings. From this sad chapter in the history of human-animal relations we may conclude that the reverse does not apply. Love of animals does not guarantee love of human beings. Part of our humanity is the relationship to those creatures that are dependent upon us. But, on close consideration, it does not follow that love of animals, to the extent that it is only emotional and not sustained by ethical postulates, constitutes a defense against inhumanity.

[translated by Boria Sax]

## THE NAZIS: A HOLOCAUST FOR HUMANS, A COMPASSION FOR ANIMALS

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We see the paradox and seek to explain the connection. How could the Nazis, perpetrators of the systematic mass slaughter of millions of Jews and other *untersmenschen*, profess at the same time their love of animals and their concern that Germans and other people did not yet have a sufficiently systematic and humane

body of law to protect animals from cruel treatment and inhumane methods of slaughter? In their insightful and provocative article "Understanding Nazi Animal Protection and the Holocaust," Arnold Arluke and Boria Sax call attention to this appalling paradox and draw upon a multiplicity of sources to provide a many-sided explanation of the connection—manysided because the analysis turns on different factors, historical-political, psychological, and social, as their essay proceeds.

Before coming to terms with the article's overall interpretation, it is necessary and proper to summarize *seriatim* the most important themes in the authors' approach. It goes without saying that their cogent and dispassionate analysis as scholars in no way interferes with their, and our, moral outrage over this cruel and bizarre contradiction in Nazi mind and behavior. In agreeing with a large part, but not all, of their explanation I adhere to the same credo.

First, the endlessly detailed Nazi regulations on animal protection, slaughtering conditions, and hunting restrictions during the thirties seemed to stem from a compulsive psychological need to compensate, that is, to raise up the human quotient in animal life as they set about lowering the human quotient in certain kinds of human groups (i.e., Jews, Gypsies, Slavs, and Africans, judged "racially inferior"). Second, this skewed psychological premise was reinforced by recourse to German racial and anti-Semitic ideology that had been present in Germany since the 19th century. Pliant scholars were readily available to draw the obvious contrast between the noble, sacred animals of nature, governed by instinct and purified by discipline, and those inferior human races weakened by excessive mixture and muddled modes of

rationalist thinking. Hence, animals, though lower than the purest human Aryans (read "Germans"), were still above the less-than-human Jews and others. History could prove it and science could demonstrate it.

Third, individual Nazi leaders from Hitler on down could rationalize the most appalling public policies by translating the public into the private and personal. How could Nazism be evil if its highest leader loved dogs, detested hunting, and practiced vegetarianism? This trait, the inversion of C. Wright Mills's contention that we can come to understand only if we translate our private concerns into public policy, is by no means unique to the Nazis. Arluke and Sax should have cited a few examples from nontotalitarian, democratic societies such as convicted murderers whose lawyers praise them as good to their families and regular churchgoers, or people who were indifferent to racism and poverty but who are moved to storms of indignation and rage over one incident of animal mistreatment. Fourth, the Nazis employed pseudoscientific biology, converting genetics and the principles of animal and livestock breeding into a monstrous doctrine. As in the animal world, "higher" animals and Aryan races could be bred up, "lower" animals and non-Aryan races could be bred out. The Nazis not only professed a cloud-cuckoo eugenics, they even sought to implement it in unspeakable experiments in the camps.

Given this conglomeration constructed from psychology, history, biology, and childish Wagnerian mysticism, the Nazis could proceed to do what they intended to do anyway. "Theories" notwithstanding, they could expropriate the property of the Jews and then kill them. Having effectively documented the way in which this rationale for the elevation of animals

and the degradation of “inferior” humans was built, Arluke and Sax can then dissolve the paradox. Nature for Nazis is holistic, is One. So “higher” humans and animals together merit our humane treatment; “lower” humans deserve our contempt. “The Holocaust itself may have depended on this unique cultural conception of what it meant to be human in relation to animals.”

As already noted, Arluke and Sax have analyzed the Nazi “philosophy” of animals-and-humans with thoroughness and discernment. In showing us how the Nazis converted metaphor into doctrine, then propaganda, then policy, then horrifying practice, they make an important and innovative contribution. However, what is still missing, I think, is a coda, an effort to demonstrate in social-psychological and political terms *how both the racial doctrines and the animal doctrines encountered a field of receptivity in the German population during the thirties*. What needs to be addressed is why some ideologies, profound or shallow, inspired or meretricious, sometimes fall on fertile soil and sometimes do not. In Germany, in the years after Weimar, they did.

It would be out of place and presumptuous for me to try to develop in this commentary, the economic, political, and social reasons why Germans in that particular time and place were particularly receptive to the themes so well laid out by Arluke and Sax. In any case, there are many studies of the rise and fall of Nazism that provide just such interpretation. However, they may differ in perspective and emphasis. What I would like to suggest in general, with regard to this process of studying the “reach” of doctrines into the structure of society, is that astute leaders very often know what will play in Peoria

...or Paris...or Berlin. They then apply the strategy of what I should like to call the technique of *SENPRIM* or *Sentimental Primitivism*. Here, the leader, in seeking votes or support in general, estimates what appeal to sentimentality and primitive emotions is most likely to strike a responsive chord in the population. SENPRIM can be positive or negative; it can be linked to people’s cherished values or to their deepest ethnic stereotypes and prejudices. Reinforcement by evidence from history or “proof” from science is useful to the appeal but is not required. The essential rules are to be simple, to be direct, and to speak to the basic emotions. Thus the resonance in the German family for Hitler’s tearfully sentimental love of dogs. Thus the appeal to bureaucratic order and efficiency, as well as ethics, in the detailed regulations on animal slaughter.

But the quintessential example of receptivity and the play of SENPRIM is the linkage of Jews to human and animal behavior, as Arluke and Sax show conclusively in the illustrations from documents and leaders’ personal memoirs. Receptivity to anti-Semitism had long been present. From religious history, the Jews could be summoned as Christ-killers and vile traitors (cf. Luther). In secular terms, in the unsettled economic and social times of post-World War I Germany, Germans were open to caricatures of Jews as greedy capitalists and revolutionary bolsheviks (without contradiction), both undermining the state. In such a context enter animals. To be concerned for the welfare of animals was only to underline the difference between good German butchers and evil kosher butchers. If the pig was a fine animal and a source of excellent meat, regard the Jews; they taboo the pig. If Aryans were the



“pure” human animal, Jews were the “mongrelized” version. And so on.

It is important to understand the sources, in documents and memoirs, of the deformed myths of the Nazis about animals and humans, humans and animals. It is equally important to understand why in post-Weimar Germany of the thirties, so many Germans were ready, willing, and eager to accept the myth of Nazi leadership as stern and disciplined but just and compassionate toward animals, and, equally, the myth of Nazi leadership as stern and disciplined and thus, necessarily, compelled to be even more stern and disciplined in the treatment of that cancer upon the body social of Germany, the less-than-human Jews.

## ANTIVIVISECTIONISM, ANIMAL EXPERIMENTATION, AND NAZISM

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Apparently, the analogies obtaining between certain salient features of the Nazi era and certain aspects of the debate over the legitimacy of animal use in science are just too good not to be appropriated and used as a bludgeon, by both sides. Thus critics of animal research point up obvious parallels between the German incarceration of humans and scientists’ caging of research animals, or between pointless, ill-conceived, brutal, Nazi experiments on humans and pointless ill-conceived, brutal experiments undertaken by contemporary researchers on animals. Supporters of animal research, on the other hand, regularly

inform us, as did President Donald Kennedy of Stanford, that Hitler was an anti-vivisectionist too and that Nazis, like antivivisectionists, valued animal life but had contempt for human life. Both sides are equally and trivially correct, of course, and both sides are equally unconcerned about patent disanalogies.

What lessons, then, can be drawn for this debate from the facts admirably chronicled by Drs. Arluke and Sax? What can we conclude from the fact that the Nazis did deplore invasive animal research while at the same time they displayed no concern for invasive research on human beings? Relatively little. We certainly learn that it is psychologically possible for people to be concerned about animals and cavalier in their treatment of people—but we probably knew that already; indeed both sides knew that already.

But far more extravagant conclusions are regularly drawn from the Nazi case. Those supportive of animal research want to construct the following syllogism:

All Nazis are antivivisectionists

*All animal rights people are  
antivivisectionists*

∴ All animal rights people are Nazis,  
which is as patently invalid as:

All dogs are animals

*All cats are animals*

∴ All cats are dogs.

Nor does this moderate version:

Some Nazis are antivivisectionists

*Some animal rights people are  
antivivisectionists*

∴ Some animal rights people are Nazis

fare any better.

Those opposing animal research wish to construct the following syllogism:

All Nazis are brutal towards their  
research subjects  
*All researchers are brutal towards  
their research subjects*  
∴ All researchers are Nazis,

which commits ironically enough, the same fallacy, as does the corresponding moderate version, which would replace the “all” with “some.” Thus far, then, neither side can, without fallacy, support its conclusion from the indisputable facts of Nazi activity.

Perhaps, then, each side should be construed as making a weaker claim than the tight but invalid syllogisms described above. Perhaps, rather than asserting a logical connection, each side should be seen as advancing a psychological claim about tendencies or likelihoods using the Nazis as evidence. Antivivisectionists, then, would be asserting the claim that invasive research on humans or animals can be brutalizing, and those defending animal use might be pointing up the fact that deep compassion for animals may well accompany cavalier lack of compassion for humans. But both claims, when cashed out, are weak indeed. At best, the antivivisectionists are licensed to infer only that invasive research may be brutalizing, not that it must be. By the same token, researchers are licensed to infer only that some people concerned about animals may lack concern for humans.

In fact, it appears that any strong, putatively lawlike, psychological claims about the relationships between how one treats humans and how one treats animals are readily disconfirmed. For example, though a venerable tradition associated with Thomas Aquinas asserts that cruelty to animals leads to cruelty to people, this claim is

open to question. If by cruelty one means something like intentional, willful, sadistic activity engaged in for pleasure, it is certainly true for a circumscribed range of psychopaths, but it is equally untrue for a range of others who do not graduate from animals to people, but rather may use the animals as an outlet for feelings that might otherwise be vented on people. But if by cruelty one means, as animal welfare advocates often do, something broader, such as causing harm to animals for reasons other than absolute necessity, the claim is most certainly false. Arguably, some researchers hurt animals to answer some useless question or to advance a career, while many other people such as confinement agriculturalists hurt animals to make a profit, and others do so for public entertainment, yet such people do not regularly or even often advance to treating people the same way.

The reason, of course, is that our consensus morality has historically proscribed the latter and not the former, but such proscription serves precisely to weaken the tightness of the link between the antecedent and consequent of Aquinas’ assertion. Indeed, some standard ideological interpretations of Judaeo-Christian morality have suggested that there is a positive duty to exploit the animal (and natural) world for human benefit, yet clearly forbade human exploitation.

Consider another putative psychological truism, namely that anyone who puts great emphasis on concern for animals in a world where people suffer must be a misanthrope. The existence of such moral exemplars as St. Francis, Gandhi, and Schweitzer clearly puts paid to such a claim. Once again, what is likely to make such a claim true or false in a given case is not some universal fact about how the human mind works. Rather, the operative feature will likely be the moral framework

in which one is operating. If one operates in a context in which moral concerns must be rigidly prioritized, in a Gestalt that assimilates moral choices to triage, it is very possible that those who concern themselves with animal suffering at the cost of deliberately minimizing concerns about human suffering may indeed be those disposed to misanthropy. But for most of us, given the moral ideological climate in which we dwell, morality “is not a single-shot shotgun,” as one of my cowgirl students admirably put it. If it were perceived as a single-shot shotgun, we would need to feel guilty about giving charity to a high school band and to the United Negro College Fund rather than to famine relief. Indeed, our whole life is charged with moral commitments and choices; it is too much to ask that we not engage in those worthy projects that intuitively appeal to us, but instead, always subordinate them to some higher priority.

Thus even in a weaker, nonsyllogistic, psychologistic sense, we should be chary of advancing lawlike claims connecting how we treat animals with how we treat people. For one does not lead inexorably to the other; the connection is rather mediated through a *tertium quid*, the moral ideological stage on which we operate, more often than not, unconsciously. Indeed, we cannot even generalize from how someone treats one set of people to how he or she treats (or feels one ought to treat) another set of people; nor for that matter, can we generalize from how one treats one set of animals to how one will (or feels one ought to) treat another set of animals.

Robert Jay Lifton, in his agonizing attempt to understand the Nazi doctors, details some of the psychological (or ideological/moral) mechanisms that allowed compassionate physicians to kill “defec-

tive” children and to exterminate Jews. Some apparently genuinely believed the Nazi ideological claim that the German state was analogous to a human body being invaded by pathogens (Jews, defectives), and that if a physician had the duty to kill pathogenic organisms to save the individual body, he or she had an *fortiori* duty to do the same in order to save the body politic. Still others fell prey to a perverted version of Kantianism, implicit in certain aspects of German Protestantism, which suggests (erroneously) that since that which one is inclined to do is pleasing, such actions cannot be truly moral (i.e., done strictly for the sake of morality). Only acts that are done for the sake of duty and not inclination are moral acts. The fact that one is disinclined to kill Jews and children when the state demands it shows that doing it—and subordinating one’s instincts against it in order to do it—bespeaks a highly developed moral sense. Such was Eichmann’s defense when he invoked the Kantian moral requirement of doing one’s duty.

Correctively, we all know of people—the traditional humane movement is full of them—with very selective concern for animal suffering who will oppose a research project or surgical exercise if it is done on dogs but not care if it is done on pigs, which are “food animals.” Thus various universities, and the Department of Defense, have calculatingly and cynically moved from dogs and cats to farm animals for invasive purposes. Indeed, many people will not object to a terminal surgical exercise performed on a “purpose-bred” beagle, yet vigorously oppose the same exercise performed on a pound dog, destined to be killed, on the grounds that the latter is a “pet.”

In short, as history amply documents, ideology can link any action or motivation

with almost any other. A sensitive humanitarian like Pasteur can do unspeakable things to animals—things he personally abhors—because he is absolutely certain that such action is the only possible way to ameliorate human suffering. (This is a common response from animal researchers, even today.) Alternatively, as I have shown in detail elsewhere, one can genuinely believe in one's scientific moments that animals cannot feel pain or suffer (or at least that one cannot know if they do), or that science has nothing to do with ethics, thereby preserving one's sensitivity and sanity, and yet be as concerned as anyone else with the family dog's pain in one's nonscientific moments. Indeed, the very *need* for the ideological view of animals as unfeeling machines, which flourished in Descartes' time with the advent of physiological experiments performed without anesthesia and then was rejuvenated in the 20th century with the wholesale advent of animal research, may well bespeak an innate human sympathy for animal pain, which must be suppressed by ideological flights of fancy.

By the same token, some animal rights people can suspend their deep-rooted aversion to spreading hatred and violence in the case of animal researchers by appeal to some such ideological Manichaeian move as creating an absolute schism between good and evil, with animal exploiters falling unequivocally onto the side of pure evil. Or an environmental philosopher, supposedly morally concerned about all neglected aspects of the biosphere, can cavalierly dismiss the treatment of domestic animals as morally irrelevant on the grounds that they are simply degenerate human products.

In the face of these remarks one should be skeptical of drawing any conclusions about the connection between Nazism and antivivisection or vivisection. Indeed,

it appears that one can more readily and accurately draw conclusions about those who draw conclusions from this unique historical connection than about the connection itself.

## HUMANS, ANIMALS, AND MORAL PRIORITIES

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Arluke and Sax (1992) propose three different ways of accounting for the grotesque juxtaposition of cruelty to humans and kindness to animals in Nazi Germany. First they suggest that, though superficially contradictory, such conduct may have been an accurate reflection of the personal prejudices of Hitler and other Nazi leaders. Analyses of Nazi psychopathology indicate that, in addition to their rigid authoritarianism, many of these individuals had difficulty relating to other people and may have compensated for this deficit by becoming overly attached to animal companions. Their tendency to view and treat some animals better than some humans was therefore consistent with this aspect of their personalities. Arluke and Sax further suggest that animal protection laws provided the Nazis with a legal excuse to persecute Jews. The earliest legislation focused on inhumane (kosher) slaughtering methods and vivisection, two areas in which legal restrictions evidently posed a greater threat to Jews than to non-Jews. Finally, the authors propose their third and favorite theory according to which the Nazis succeeded in reconciling the Holocaust with strict animal protection laws by redefining the moral boundary between

humans and animals such that (some) animals could be regarded as more entitled to sympathy and protection than some humans. Whereas the first two of these ideas seem highly plausible, the last is based on some doubtful concepts and assumptions.

Perhaps the most obvious difficulty with this theory is the fact that it is perfectly possible to dehumanize certain people without necessarily altering the status of animals in the process. Or, to put it another way, there is no need to shift or redefine the boundary between human and nonhuman in order to push some humans over that boundary. On the contrary, history is replete with examples of both animals and human minority groups being treated as equally inferior and unworthy of moral consideration (see Serpell 1986). To quote Levi-Strauss (1973), "once men begin to feel cramped in their geographical, social and mental habitat, they are in danger of being tempted by the simple solution of denying one section of the species the right to be considered human." Classifying Jews or other minorities as animals would certainly require a redefinition of what it means to be human, but it need not depend on any corresponding emancipation of nonhumans.

The authors' cavalier use of Douglas's (1966) purity-contamination metaphor also leaves a lot to be desired. According to Douglas, the concept of pollution or dirt arises as a by-product of the human tendency to order and classify the material world—a process that requires grouping things in terms of shared attributes or properties. The danger of pollution exists when something either possesses ambiguous, intermediate properties (and is therefore hard to classify) or when something that is itself unambiguous occurs in an anomalous or unexpected context. In other words, pollution is synonymous with disorder. The Book of Leviticus, for example,

describes the pig as an abomination because it muddles categories; it has a cloven hoof like other "cattle" but it fails to chew the cud.

Nowhere does Douglas imply that animals as a group constitute a polluting category. Animals watching television or wearing clothes might be construed as such, but not animals *per se*. Yet Arluke and Sax state that in *many* societies "differences between humans and other species serve as fundamental reminders of what is considered to be pure and what is thought to be contaminating" as if animals obviously represented a category of dirty things. No effort is made to substantiate this and other similar assertions, and the authors ignore the fact that many cultures not only fail to regard animals as polluting but actually choose to perceive them as honored kinsmen and ancestors (Benedict 1929, Campbell 1984). In fact, Arluke and Sax seem so keen on this curious idea of humans defending their "purity" from the threat of polluting agents that they appear to conclude that the Holocaust itself was the consequence of some sort of universal law of cultural hygiene.

No one would deny that the Nazis were obsessed with their own cultural and racial identity, but the historical evidence suggests that this was a means to an end rather than an end in itself. Ever since their humiliating defeat by the armies of Napoleon, Germans had experienced a severe loss of face within Europe. The ignominious outcome of the First World War, and the devastating war reparations demanded by the Allied Powers, exacerbated this sense of humiliation and reduced the German economy to a state of terminal collapse. Against this historical and economic backdrop, Hitler's message was appealing because it attributed Germany's downfall to the machinations of perceived outsiders—Jews, Slavs, Bolsheviks, foreign capitalists,



and other “undesirables”—rather than to the Germans themselves.

To make this message convincing, however, Hitler needed a clear definition of what actually constituted an ethnic German; hence the Nazis’ adoption of the bogus, anthropological concept of the *Herrenrasse* or “master race” of Aryan origin. In effect, Germans were sold the idea that all the misfortunes of the previous century had been the product of cultural and racial miscegenation. Therefore, according to Nazi logic, Germany could only recapture its heroic past by getting rid of these other ethnic groups—now conveniently reclassified as *Untermenschen* or “subhumans” (Davidson 1977). Seen in this light, the Nazi goal of German purity was a practical, if wholly misguided, step toward the reattainment of economic and cultural supremacy. And just as we classify competing species as pests in order to exterminate them with impunity, so the Nazis relegated Jews and other minorities to the status of vermin—enemies of the state—so that they too could be destroyed with a clear conscience. Coincidentally, Hitler and his cronies may have chosen to elevate certain animals to quasi-human status, but there is no obvious reason why this should have been a precondition or correlate of the decision to exterminate other ethnic groups.

These comments and criticisms should not in the end detract from what is a thoughtful and stimulating treatment of a profoundly disturbing topic. Arluke and Sax’s penetrating study warns us against the dangers of assuming that all those who are kind and caring toward nonhumans are necessarily likely to feel the same about humans. On the other hand, we should not allow our knowledge of the Hitlers of this world to poison our view of vegetarians, lovers of wildlife, or all those

who display a special affection and sympathy for animals. Both individually, and as a species, we are extraordinarily adept at awarding or denying moral status to other humans and nonhumans when it serves our own selfish interests to do so. Often, the choices we make in this regard seem arbitrary or paradoxical, devoid of any kind of rational ethic or principle. Nazi Germany presents us with a particularly gross distortion or inversion of conventional morality. But similar, if less extreme, paradoxes and contradictions still permeate our current relationships with both people and animals. It is important that we understand how these sorts of moral inconsistencies arise and are maintained, and Arluke and Sax have made an excellent contribution to this ongoing study.

### **AUTHOR’S RESPONSE: GOOD TO HATE WITH-ANIMAL AND NAZI SYMBOLS THEN AND NOW**

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Our article, “Understanding Nazi Animal Protection and the Holocaust,” argued that a paradox existed in Nazi Germany because efforts were apparently taken to establish humane treatment of animals at the same time that brutal treatment was leveled toward people. We drew on personal, political, and cosmological explanations to understand why this paradox occurred and suggested that there was underlying all three explanations a boundary blurring between humans and animals that may have reduced the apparent paradox to Germans of that era.

Responses to our article were more

complimentary than critical and, although not apparent at first glance, more interconnected than independent. This interconnection harkens back to Levi-Strauss's (1966) interest in why the symbolism of animals makes them good to eat. He argued that attitudes toward animals, as expressed in dietary rules, do not make total sense without viewing their metaphorical (not causal) connection to other systematic conceptual systems in a society or, more specifically, between sex and marriage rules and eating prohibitions.

A similar metaphorical approach to understanding attitudes toward animals underlies the responses to our article. Instead of asking why animals are good to eat, we ask why they are good to hate with, whether we are talking about Nazi Germany or contemporary America. We will see that attitudes toward animals, when expressed as hate toward humans, will make sense only by viewing their metaphorical connection to rules for human differentiation.

### Explaining the Paradox

Almost all of the commentators understood that we were not making any causal connections between Nazi animal protection and cruelty toward humans. We simply were trying to understand what factors might have led to the existence of the paradox. **Kalechofsky** does not get this. Our central goal was not, as she claims, to establish a causal connection between "the Nazis' purported fondness for animals and the Holocaust, and/or their hatred for human beings in general." Nor did we argue, as **Kalechofsky** herself contends, that "concern for animals, or a tradition of animal protection laws, leads to alienation from human beings, or to anti-Semitism." As our conclusion made quite clear, it was

the boundary blurring that took place behind *all three* (personal, political, cosmological) explanations of the paradox that contributed to (not caused) the Holocaust. Rather than trivializing the Holocaust, as **Kalechofsky** contends, we have sought to add to the already large and complex body of scholarship that seeks to understand this hideous and perplexing event.

### The Personal Explanation

Our first explanation was that the paradox existed because key Nazi figures may have had stronger attachments to animals than to people. From this psychological perspective, the motivations behind animal protection measures could be seen as sincere. Whereas **Bookbinder**, **Bryant**, and **Serpell** accept this argument, **Meyer** finds it to be limited. He contends that because we sought to explain the rise of the animal protection laws of 1933, our discussion needed to be limited to those Nazis who had political influence at that time (i.e., Hitler). However, we believe that he may have misread our paper. It is clear in our discussion that we sought to understand the Nazi preoccupation with animal protection that *began* in 1933 and continued almost to the end of the War.

**Meyer** also suggests that many prominent Nazis may have cared for people and animals when they were close to them but not when they were anonymous masses. However, **Meyer's** example—Hitler's order to kill 30,000 horses—does not support his contention. This incident tells us little about the extent or nature of Hitler's affinity for animals either as individuals in his personal life or as large and remote masses. We must not forget that horses served a major role as a substitute for mechanized forces in the Second World War. When it began, over 80% of the German army's motive power

depended on horses. Eventually, two and a half million horses served on the Eastern Front, and an average of one thousand died each day (Lucas 1979). Presumably, the killing of horses at Krim was a necessary strategic move since Russia depended on them as much as Germany.

**Kalechofsky's** determined effort to dispense with the "personal" argument, if not our entire article, seems to be based on her own apparent political or personal agenda that leads her to reject possibilities and evidence that scholars are obligated to entertain. She absolutely rejects that there might be any sincerity of motive behind Nazi animal protection efforts and antivivisection initiatives. She argues illogically, I believe, that, if Göring's antivivisection ban had "loopholes" or was never enforced, then no sincere motivation could be behind it. However, despite the limitations of the ban, it may still have reflected genuine attitudes, such as the well-documented Nazi interest in natural lifestyle, rejection of modern medicine, and desire to return to a premodern society more connected to nature (Proctor 1988). For instance, one leading "naturalist," Dr. Karl Kotschau, argued that a major task facing the National Socialist revolution was to apply its ideology to science and replace the allopathic approach with an organic, holistic world view. It did so in its support of toxicology, ecology, and environmental science (Proctor 1988).

Nazi antivivisection was merely a single aspect of this "volkish" vision, and could only "play in Peoria," as **Robbins** says, if it touched real and important "chords" in the German people. Thus, instead of glibly divorcing the quotation below as sheer propaganda, as **Kalechofsky** would appear to want us to do, I might say that it realistically portrays Nazi attitudes toward animal experimentation. Note that its opposition to vivisection is not an isolated con-

cern, but is related to two central Nazi chords—a natural lifestyle and anti-Semitism. The second of these is well described by **Bookbinder**.

Additional support for Nazi interest in these matters comes from the authors of the magazine *Neugeist/Die Weisse Fahne* (New Spirit/The White Banner), who asked their readers the following questions:

Do you know that your Fuhrer is a vegetarian, and that he does not eat meat because of his general attitude towards life and his love for the world of animals? Do you know that your Fuhrer is against all artificial stimulants because he knows that they paralyze the mind, make the body sick, destroy intuition, and choke your inner voice? Do you know that another great statesman, Mussolini, avoids opulent meals, alcohol, and tobacco, and that he eats little, in particular little meat, that he is a friend of animals, a friend of a healthy lifestyle and of nature, and that he knows that his attitude and this style of life enables him to master his stupendous load of work every day? Do you know that your Fuhrer is an exemplary friend of animals, and even as a chancellor, he is not separated from the animals he has kept for years?...the Fuhrer is an ardent opponent of any torture of animals, in particular vivisection, which means the scientifically disguised torture of animals, that disgusting product of the Jewish materialistic school in medicine, and he has declared to terminate those conditions as soon as possible in the National Socialist state by making vivisection illegal, thus fulfilling his role as the savior of animals from continuous and nameless torments and pain (Wuttke-Groneberg 1980:81).

Another antivivisection statement, which would also have to be dismissed as mere propaganda, touches the authentic Nazi chords of anticlericism and moral elevation of animals. It notes:

National Socialism has for the first time started to demonstrate to all Germans that everybody has a duty towards the animal. Most Germans were brought up with a notion that God created the animals to the benefit of humans. The Church who teaches this dogma inherited it from Judaism. We know only a few clergymen who represent this attitude to the utmost extreme in cruelty. In general, they merely intend to make the difference between humans and the soulless animal appear as large as possible. Every friend of animals knows the extent of mutual understanding between human and animal and how far the feeling of community can develop, and there are many friends of animals in Germany, many who reject torture of animals for humanitarian reasons. In general, however, there is still a vast amount of unfeelingness, crudeness, and sadism. Much has to be done, and particularly urgent is the fight against vivisection that is not only a deprivation of culture, but that has to be regarded as a felony (Wuttke-Groneberg 1980:321).

Although there may have been very real sentiment behind antivivisection, the specific ban on animal experimentation was indeed contradictory, calling for the prohibition of “all kinds” of vivisection but permitting some types. Although the ban permitted the use of animals in certain instances, it hardly follows, as **Kalechofsky** suggests, that Göring or the Nazis were not intent on preventing or at least opposing some animal research. Nazi philosophy and practice was full of contradictions, and there is no reason why their campaign against vivisection would be an exception. Moreover, even if these laws were never enforced, or even if they did not reflect any genuine interest in animals, how does **Kalechofsky** account for the continuous legal, institutional, and educational preoccupation in Germany with animal protection until the end of the war?

**Kalechofsky** also dismisses the sincerity of less official measures toward animals, such as Hitler’s vegetarianism, because she claims “there is plenty of evidence that he ate meat” and because he did not discuss it in *Mein Kampf*. However, there are no citations to support her contention that Hitler often ate meat and Hitler’s vegetarianism started after he wrote *Mein Kampf*. **Kalechofsky** also wonders why Hitler’s vegetarianism draws interest and his teetotaling and non-smoking does not. We would be remiss not to probe its meaning since we are trying to make sense out of all the data available on Nazi German attitudes toward animals. In the same way, if we were studying German health attitudes, we would want to know the meaning of Hitler’s teetotaling and non-smoking.

**Kalechofsky** also claims that there are “plenty of examples of Nazi cruelty toward animals,” but again provides no specific citations to back up her argument. She then submits three examples, one which is patently wrong (hunting was criticized), one which is consistent with established scientific practice in many nations at the time (Germany was not the only country to use baboons in experiments), and one which, if true, was exceedingly rare (gladiatorial combat with animals). Moreover, even if the examples were true, they would not support a blanket generalization that the Nazi’s encouraged cruelty toward animals rather than animal protection. No society has yet demonstrated a consistent attitude toward domestic and wild animals. One can discern trends in any society but there are always individuals and groups who will deviate from the norms.

## The Political Explanation

Our second explanation was that, at least to some extent, the paradox did not rest on

genuine or exclusive concern for animals because Nazi animal protection measures were used for purposes unrelated to animals, such as attacking Jews through laws prohibiting kosher slaughter. We did not argue that Nazism was the result of the kosher slaughter ban or of any animal protection measure, as **Kalechofsky** maintains. In fact, until she muddles our findings with her imposed causal connections, she seems to agree with us that animal protection measures may have largely been a legal veil serving purposes unrelated to animal welfare. That these laws could do so shows how animals were good to hate within Nazi Germany because they made metaphorical connections to the way Germans felt they were being treated.

**Bryant** and **Meyer**, with some qualification, concur with this argument. We did not claim, as **Bryant** contends, that these measures were part of a “well-defined and orchestrated master plan,” but it is clear that at least the laws banning kosher slaughter were part of a deliberate series of actions to isolate the “Jewish disease” through legal means (Lerner 1992). The latent function of other laws may have been to attack Jews. This is not surprising because, as **Bookbinder** notes, German law was “recast” to embody Nazi values. Nor were animal protection measures turned only against Jews. The 1941 German film *I Accuse* was released to test public response to legislation to kill persons with mental disorders that followed on the heels of legislation authorizing the euthanasia of animals. The film had jurors discussing the guilt of a physician who performed human euthanasia. One juror noted to his peers: “A few weeks ago, gentleman, I gave my old dog the coup de grace. He was blind and paralyzed...but he had served me well.” Another juror responded: “But animals are different.” To

which the first speaker retorted: “Should people be treated worse than animals?” Certainly, there may have been other latent functions, and one of these, as we briefly noted, might have been that of propaganda. Even if we accept **Meyer’s** point that it was more likely that these measures were used to win support at home and abroad than they were used to attack certain people, these functions were not mutually exclusive.

## The Cosmological Explanation

Our third explanation maintained that the paradox was possible because Nazi cosmology dehumanized some humans and humanized some animals. **Serpell** strongly criticizes this argument, but he first misstates it and then demonstrates the logical holes in (his) the argument. We did not argue that the status of animals had to be elevated in order to dehumanize people, but rather that moral elevation of animals and moral devaluation of people were occurring simultaneously—hence this third theory of the paradox. **Serpell** also objects to our use of Douglas’s symbolic anthropology to understand the paradox. He quotes our article: “differences between humans and other species serve as fundamental reminders of what is considered to be pure and what is thought to be contaminating.” He then construes this to mean, in his words, “animals obviously represented dirty things” and imagines that he is contradicting us by pointing out that many cultures perceive animals as “honored kinsman and ancestors.” This simply confirms our statement. Animals so honored by these cultures have become highly anthropomorphized and are no longer solely animals in people’s minds—they are totemic creatures that bridge species differences. In such cultures, there are also



other animals that remain purely animal and that serve to remind people of the differences between what is regarded as human and what is not human but there is no implication that all animals or all people are “dirty.” Themes of purity and contamination depend on these oppositions.

One way that cultures can define what it means to be human is by establishing boundaries, and therefore differences, between species. When these are clear, there is purity, when they are blurred (anomalous), there is contamination. Perhaps **Serpell** erroneously surmises that “animals per se” or “animals as a group constitute a polluting category” because he slices out of context the quotation in question and ignores the rest of our sentence, prior paragraph, and prior section of the article. That material, in my opinion, gives this quotation a very different spin than that given by **Serpell**. To rephrase the quotation to reflect what I feel is obvious given the rest of our text: Differences between [qualities attributed to] humans and [qualities attributed to] other species serve as fundamental reminders of what is considered to be pure [humans with only human qualities] and what is thought to be contaminating [humans with animal qualities]. In other words, differences between species can serve as reminders of what it means to be a pure versus a polluted human.

**Kalechofsky** seems to have a problem with this third argument because she holds *us* responsible for inconsistencies in *Nazi* thinking! She does not see that the use of animal symbols within Nazi society was disordered, arbitrary, and capricious. Indeed, this thinking was far more complex than **Kalechofsky**’s simplistic rendering of it as noble animal-ignoble human. For example, even though admiring comments by Nazis toward animals were generally restricted to what are normally thought of as “higher animals,” the Nazis could at

one moment use apes as symbols to debase the Jews while at another time speak respectfully of apes. That is the inconsistency we found in Nazi German thinking. That is why animals are good to hate with.

**Kalechofsky** again holds us responsible for inconsistency in Nazi thinking when she claims that we contradict ourselves by pointing out that “the purpose of the Law for the Protection of Animals was to awaken and strengthen compassion...” but that Hitler wanted the new German to emulate certain animal behaviors such as cruelty. We clearly explain, on page 11, that “compassion normally reserved for humans was to be redirected toward animals, and the cold aggressiveness of animal instinct became the model German.” In this case, at the same time that the Nazis animalized people (e.g., they should act toward fellow humans as unfeelingly as might an animal), they expected Germans to regard animals with sentiment (e.g., compassion) normally directed to humans.

Other responders, however, were drawn to and strongly supportive of this explanation. **Bryant**, for one, found this explanation compelling because there are other empirical examples of animal symbols being used to justify the killing or mistreatment of people, such as the American portrayal of the Japanese as animals during the World War II. However, **Bryant** feels that this animalization was not unique to the Nazis and that the monstrous crimes committed in the Nazi era did not constitute a singular national aberration. As partial support for his contention, he equates the Holocaust with various wartime atrocities committed by American soldiers, a point with which many would certainly take argument. Indeed, a number of scholars present convincing arguments for its uniqueness (e.g., Jonassohn 1988). Moreover, he contradicts himself by saying that “the Nazi era is quite singular in the

breadth and depth of its brutality and inhumanity.” Nowhere do we say or imply that Nazi Germany has been the only culture to morally elevate the status of animals while lowering that of some humans; what seems unique are the extremes of these polarities and the troubling paradox they present. By not offering any examples that come close to the extremes of the Nazi paradox, **Bryant** fails to support his argument.

What made this explanation convincing to **Birke** was its underlying theoretical framework; namely that “natural,” taken for granted dichotomies such as human versus animal will be socially constructed in all cultures rather than only in Nazi Germany. This social constructionist approach, I believe, negates **Herzog’s** claim that the paradox does not vanish even if we understand its social context. Ethnohistorians and ethnographers agree that what appears to the observer as a contradiction may not be experienced as a contradiction from the perspective of the people studied. Nowhere was this point made clearer than in Gunner Myrdal’s (1944) *An American Dilemma*, where the author showed how Americans could maintain racist attitudes while simultaneously professing to believe in equality. Did this paradox between racism and democratic ideals vanish because of the historical and social psychological mechanisms that existed to justify this inconsistency? Sociologically, I would say yes—to the extent that it was “built into” the culture in the same way that apple pie and motherhood are passed on to future generations as part of the American way of life.

## Implications

Several responses did not focus on the specific results of our study but rather on the

use of the Nazi era by contemporary animal activists and animal-research advocates to discredit their opponents intellectually and morally. According to **Rollin**, it is illogical to connect the behavior of Nazis to that of contemporaries. Although it is important to remind those who make these connections that their thinking is flawed, I find it far more interesting intellectually to examine their thinking as data on how people can hate with animal symbols, expressed in this case through Nazi imagery. **Jasper’s** response identifies the implicit animality of these images by noting that both camps portray the “enemy” in terms of “unquestionable evil.” Use of terms such as “Nazis” and the “Holocaust” conjure up images of people capable of great brutality and moral depravity. They are wild men, beasts, savages, or the devil incarnate. In short, they are demons. Demonization by animal activists and animal-research advocates results in the selective use and filtering of history. **Herzog** lays this out quite clearly by noting that both sides make connections with Nazi history when these connections undermine the other camp, but neither side sees the Nazi era as having any relevance to them.

Animal activists have demonized researchers by tying certain events in this period—such as the treatment of Jews in concentration camps—to contemporary animal laboratories. Yet activists argue that other events—such as Hitler’s vegetarianism—do not have any relevance. For example, Ingrid Newkirk (1989) of PETA said that animal experimenters “behave to living beings exactly the way the Nazis behaved to the Jews.” Decrying a public relations movie made by the research community, Newkirk remarked: “These films show properly anesthetized animals being stroked by loving men and women in white coats. Symphony in Buchenwald.”

Researchers are also demonized by portraying them as devoid of any feeling, as inhuman and evil. Newkirk, for example, maintains that because these “barbarous vivisectors” with “perverted minds” are “dead inside to the misery that they cause,” they are able to “torture” and “carve up living animals.”

Those who advocate the use of animals for research as well as other purposes have sought to demonize leaders of the animal rights movement and, in turn, the movement itself, by comparing them to the Nazi era and its leaders. Yet supporters of research argue that other aspects of the Nazi era have no relevance to today’s practice of science. For example, in commenting on our research, a representative of the fur industry (Foner 1992) notes an “uncanny resemblance” between the thinking of Joseph Goebbels and Peter Singer and “undeniable parallels” between the tactics used by the Nazis and those by today’s antivivisectionists. There is further demonization by suggesting that activists’ opposition to research will prevent the cure of cancer, heart disease, AIDS, and other dread problems. By implication, animal rights activists must be inhuman to allow human suffering and death that might otherwise be preventable.

Yet, whether we are looking at this contemporary controversy or the historical case of Nazi Germany, it is patently clear that animals are useful symbols with which to hate. They do this because, as Levi-Strauss and others (e.g., Drummond 1977, Fine and Christoforides 1991, Tapper 1988) have suggested, animals can be metaphors of the Other that in turn can be used to draw boundaries between human groups. In the former case, these metaphors are part of the larger effort by both sides to define who should or should not have a voice as a legitimate member in the debate over animal research. In the latter

case, the metaphors played a role in defining who was or was not to be included in the human (Aryan) “race.” At the very least, the blurring and reconstructing of species boundaries, and the metaphors that result, reflect the complex and turbulent process by which groups or societies come to grips with questions of membership and identity.

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# HOLOCAUST IMAGES AND OTHER POWERFUL AMBIGUITIES IN THE DEBATES ON ANIMAL EXPERIMENTATION: FURTHER THOUGHTS

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## INTRODUCTION

My family was partly Jewish, though only by blood. Our religious observances never extended beyond including a menorah among the Christmas decorations. Nevertheless, a combination of habit and nostalgia made us, when somebody asked, continue to call ourselves "Jewish." The remnants of our Jewish identity consisted of two things, both primarily negative. First, we were not Christian. Second, my siblings and I were told repeatedly, from a very early age, in graphic detail about the horrors perpetrated in the Nazi concentration camps. We heard of every torture the Nazis devised and, I suspect, quite a few they never thought of. We were reminded over and over that "It *can* happen here." The "it," however, did not refer to any clearly articulated process or agenda, but to any transcendent evil. The result was a nervous fear pervading virtually every aspect of our lives.

Recently, I asked a college class how they felt about the newly reunited Germany. Almost all my students praised the Germans for being hard-working and making excellent cars. The most serious criticism was that the Germans had not contributed enough to the war in the Persian Gulf. Not a single student even mentioned

the Nazi concentration camps. Like so many other things that people could "never forget," these seem to have been forgotten. Actually, they have now almost completely merged in our collective imagination with countless other horrors from Genghis Khan to Stalin, Ivan the Terrible to Pol Pot. The Holocaust has, I believe, been so mythologized and universalized that it no longer seems to belong to any particular time or place. It is so identified with absolute evil that the events have lost their specific character.

The reality of the Nazi period is increasingly obscured as the concentration camps become identified in the public imagination as the setting for melodramatic adventure stories, pornographic fantasies, and other entertainments (Rosenfeld 1985). All of the memorials to the Holocaust and the solemn admonitions never to allow a repetition of it have, in the absence of any clear understanding of what happened, sometimes had a paradoxical effect. People who can neither forget the Holocaust nor remember it with any clarity and precision have reduced it to an abstraction. The Holocaust is now popularly thought of as a host of amorphous, half-articulated anxieties rather than a specific historical event.

Despite the increasingly abstract character they have taken on, references to the Holocaust have become a fairly standard feature of contemporary political discourse. Since the National Socialists were highly eclectic, borrowing freely from divergent social and philosophical movements (Mosse 1966), it is quite easy for just about anybody to identify them with his or her personal adversaries. Nazi atrocities have, for example, been regularly invoked to justify Communist domination of Eastern Europe and Israeli human rights violations. The Nazi experience has even been invoked, by equating Zionism with Nazism,

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to justify attacks on Israel. Author Amiri Baraka recently attacked his colleagues in the English Department of Rutgers University as "Nazis," for refusing to grant him early tenure (Hanley 1990).

## HOLOCAUST IMAGERY IN THE ANIMAL RIGHTS DEBATES

Animal rights activists frequently make use of images drawn from the Nazi period (Rowan 1984). Thus Ingrid Newkirk, a founder of PETA, for example, has stated that "six million died in concentration camps, six billion broiler chickens will die this year in slaughterhouses." She has also denounced pet ownership as "fascism" and stated that ending animal experimentation is "as urgent as the obligation to crush Nazi oppression of the Jews" (quoted in McCabe 1990). Such comparisons presuppose a sort of absolute standard which would obliterate the sort of distinctions that any practical morality requires and, if taken at all literally, would have the effect of trivializing the Nazi crimes to the point where they seem almost harmless.

Advocates of animal research also make use of Holocaust imagery. Larry Horton of Stanford University, for example, has written:

...we know all too well the truth about the Nazi experiments on humans in the death camps. The postwar examination of what happened there resulted in the promulgation of the Nuremberg Code, which explicitly states that human experiments should be based on results of animal experimentation. For those with a fresh understanding of Nazi policies, animal research was not an atrocity; it was a moral obligation (1988).

The reasoning of Horton is correct up to a point. The Nazis, as he points out, cam-

paigned strongly against animal research. The Nazi animal protection laws of November 1933 contained the strongest restrictions on animal experimentation ever enacted in an industrialized country, and these were reinforced by many additional legal documents (Giese & Kahler 1944).

Nevertheless, the last statement in the quotation by Horton is very questionable. Horton assumes that there is no alternative to experimenting on animals other than experimenting on human beings. He does not consider the possibility of abolishing both. This would deprive medical researchers of what is probably their major tool. Undoubtedly, some people would die as a result. Nevertheless, there are plenty of things that we are not willing to do even to preserve human lives. The threat of terrorism, for example, does not make us rush to abolish all civil liberties. And there are practical limits to the sums we are willing to spend for health care.

Horton's basic argument against the antivivisectionists is simply guilt by association. We should remember, however, that every position taken by the Nazis need not necessarily be wrong. The Nazis crusaded against tobacco almost as strongly as against vivisection (Proctor 1987), yet that is no reason why we should smoke.

Misleading as the comparisons made by Newkirk between the gassing of Jews and vivisection are, it can still be useful to examine the reasons why she and others associate these events. As the controversies surrounding diseases such as cancer and AIDS illustrate, it is impossible to make a clean separation between biological and social issues. Laboratory experiments involve not only purely biological matters but also methods of social organization and control. All aspects of a laboratory animal's life including diet, living quarters, lighting, and social contact are carefully

regulated and structured. In developing new methods of social manipulation, they raise the prospect that these methods could eventually be extended to human beings. In a certain sense, vivisection did prepare the way for the Nazi crimes. Had the Nazi doctors not learned to experiment on animals, they would not have known how to experiment on human beings.

It does not necessarily follow that the inhumanity of Nazi doctors was an inevitable consequence of experimentation on animals. Not all behavior toward animals need be extended to human beings. People have eaten meat for millennia without progressing to cannibalism. Nevertheless, one can still maintain with some plausibility that Nazi experiments on people were the continuation of a process that began with vivisection. The experience of the Third Reich only shows that abruptly limiting animal experimentation need not, by any means, produce a more compassionate society.

When Arnold Arluke and I wrote a detailed discussion of the Nazi animal protection laws in *Anthrozoös* (5:6–31), I was gratified although sometimes also a bit perplexed by the range of the responses. I was gratified because the discussion seemed to be moving beyond mutual name calling on the part of laboratory scientists and animal activists. I was perplexed that people seemed to read our article in a variety of different ways though I do not think our language was overly ambiguous. Not only poems but also analytic works can sometimes be the subject of multiple interpretations and our article plainly touched people in highly personal ways. Rather than reply to critics explicitly, which might risk letting the debate become bogged down in linguistic fine points, I think it will be more useful to submit a few reflections on possible ethi-

cal issues suggested by the phenomenon of Nazi animal protection.

## THE PARADOX OF NAZI GERMANY

That the Nazis should have performed cruel experiments on human beings while at the same time restricting experiments on animals is a paradox that, so far as I know, neither side in the debates on animal experimentation has analyzed in detail. This, however, can be viewed as simply one manifestation of a larger paradox. The National Socialists appealed to a romantic ideal of a preindustrial past, while carrying technocratic controls to an extreme that even today may well be unique (Katz 1988). Even when faced with execution, Eichmann still took pride in the efficiency with which the concentration camps were run. But, although the Nazis provide the most vivid example of this pattern, the paradox is by no means particular to Hitler's Germany. It runs through all of industrial society, as nature is simultaneously celebrated and destroyed.

An explanation for this is provided by historian Keith Thomas in *Man and the Natural World*. This is probably the most detailed analysis of the relationship between modern society and the environment to appear in recent decades, and it provides much of the groundwork for subsequent studies by scholars such as Harriet Ritvo (1987) and James Serpell (1986). Thomas formulates his basic thesis in his concluding chapter so precisely that it is worth quoting at some length:

It is too often assumed that sensibilities and morals are mere ideology: a convenient rationalization for the world as it is. But in the early modern period the truth was almost the reverse, for, by an inexorable logic, there had gradually emerged attitudes to the natural world which were essentially

incompatible with the direction in which English society was moving. The growth of towns led to new longing for the countryside. The progress of cultivation had fostered a taste for weeds, mountains and countryside. The new-found security from wild animals had generated an increasing concern to protect birds and preserve wild creatures in their natural state.... Henceforth an increasingly sentimental view of animals as pets and objects of contemplation would jostle uneasily alongside the hard facts of a world in which the elimination of "pests" and the breeding of animals for slaughter grew every day more efficient. The...children of today..., nourished by an animal diet and protected by medicine developed by animal experiments, nevertheless take toy animals to bed and lavish their affection on lambs and ponies. For adults, nature parks and conservation areas serve a function not unlike that which toy animals have for children; they are fantasies which enshrine the values-by which society as a whole cannot afford to live (1983).

This disjunction between sensibilities and practices so pervades contemporary life, including all movements and institutions, that it is likely to be apparent to most people only in limited contexts where they can achieve a certain distance and objectivity. The disjunction is, in retrospect, fully apparent in Nazi Germany, and this may help to explain the prevalence of Holocaust imagery in political debates. In contemporary America, the disjunction between sensibilities and practices is less obvious, though we should not, on that account, denigrate its importance. Both the opponents and advocates of animal experimentation, in using imagery of the Holocaust, call attention to the disjunction. The opponents of animal research fault the practices involved while defenders of animal experimentation tend to regard the sensitivities, which lead to people

recoiling from much laboratory work, as a dangerous indulgence.

## MYTHOLOGIZING OF ANIMAL EXPERIMENTATION

The emotion with which the debates on animal research are invested suggests that larger, poorly articulated spiritual issues play a role. Our treatment of animals is sometimes mythologized as some sort of original sin and a source of the elusive guilt, fear, and anguish that pervades our society. Animals represent the natural world. In experimenting on them, people symbolically enact the control and exploitation of nature that has accompanied the rise of civilization since ancient times. It calls to mind a host of distressing phenomena from industrial pollution to the destruction of wilderness. Animal research, for some people, has come to represent a technocratic mentality that, since the Neolithic Age, has allowed human beings to drive countless animals to extinction.

This is apparent from the use of certain motifs from the laboratory setting in literature. In *We*, by Russian expatriate Eugene Zamiatin (1952) (a novel from the early thirties that provided the model for both Orwell's *1984* and Huxley's *Brave New World*), the reader is presented with a future society under nearly complete technocratic control. Nature has been destroyed and people have numbers instead of names. All human activity is performed according to inflexible schedules, and the railroad timetables are remembered as the great classic of 20th century thought. The entire society is surrounded by an enormous dome. Dissenters are executed by being placed under a glass sphere in which they are deprived of oxygen, a motif taken from famous experiments on animals performed by the chemist Robert Boyle.



In a recent interview, Erwin Strittmatter, a leading novelist in the now abolished East German state, reported what happened in the early sixties when he had a character in his novel *Ole Bienkopp* call socialism “an experiment.” The novelist had obviously touched on a very sensitive point, as the seemingly insignificant exchange prompted a furious reaction from the cultural authorities and some authors (1990). The metaphor, however, has now become commonplace.

But the mythologizing of animal experimentation by its adversaries is perhaps best illustrated by *Gemma, oder Tugend und Laster* [Gemma, or Virtue and Vice] by Elpis Melena, a sentimental novel of 1877 that was instrumental in mobilizing public opinion against vivisection in Germany (Trohler and Maehle 1987). The turning point of the book comes in chapter 9 with a confrontation between the protagonist, an Angelic young girl named Gemma, and her father, the hard-hearted Doctor Farnham. The father had already caused Gemma’s mother to die of a broken heart, had tried to kill her beloved dog Roy, and had prohibited her from seeing her boyfriend Osvaldo. Nevertheless, Gemma continued to honor her father with the utmost filial piety. Love of learning, however, drove her to her father’s library, where she found out about all sorts of experiments performed on animals.

“Either you enjoy torturing me,” says Gemma to her father, “or else you do not know what things this book contains.... Read, I beg you, this paragraph and tell me if such atrocities have really been performed by people who call themselves Christians?” Over the next several pages Gemma describes, in full gruesome detail, a series of experiments in which animals are slowly killed, tormented, and cut open. Doctor Farnham goes on calmly eating his breakfast, saying only that the ex-

periments are “very interesting and useful.” He even tells Gemma that he has participated in some himself.

The theme here is a loss of trust. On the simplest level, Gemma loses faith in her father. However, in his professional distinction, just as in his emotional remoteness, Doctor Farnham seems to represent patriarchal, worldly authority. More specifically, he represents science and industry, the technocratic powers that govern so much of our lives. And it is precisely in association with vivisection that his deficiency is exposed.

The vivisectionists, it turns out in the novel, are members of a diabolic guild that, under the guise of practicing science, systematically endeavors to undermine religion and morality. The torture of animals is their satanic rite, performed not for the improvement of humanity but rather out of fiendish pleasure. Doctor Farnham eventually goes so far as to have Gemma’s pet martyred on the operating table.

One may accuse Elpis Melena of being a poor writer, but she was certainly not a Nazi. The composer Richard Wagner would soon establish a strong link between the antivivisection and anti-Semitic movements (Trohler and Maehle 1987), but *Gemma* contains, at the most, only a few hints of bigotry. Still, the movement against vivisection proved highly vulnerable to corruption and, in retrospect, the novel seems to betray that potential. Throughout the book, there is an insistence on seeing everything in terms of absolutes. Gemma is perfect in her virtue, and Doctor Farnham in his evil. Other characters, from the faithful dog to the devoted boyfriend, are similarly one-dimensional. The vision in this book does not allow for any compromises or ambiguities. Applied on a political scale, it could probably only lead to fanaticism. As one of the characters, Lord Glenford, says in



chapter 10, "...in the depths of my heart I am more than convinced that God would never allow the light of progress to come from the unspeakable suffering of innocent creatures." An activity like research, then, has to be either a noble endeavor for the betterment of humanity or a diabolic perversion. Today, however, we are coming to appreciate increasingly that progress is very seldom unequivocal. Research, particularly in medicine, is surrounded by all sorts of moral ambiguities. The debates surrounding surrogate pregnancy, transplants of fetal tissue, and the use of data from Nazi experiments are only a few examples.

## CONCLUSION

Much political rhetoric is based on analogies between research laboratories and totalitarian societies, yet these analogies are seldom carefully examined. A totalitarian society like Nazi Germany or Stalinist Russia does, in fact, resemble a laboratory for animal research in a number of ways. First, both are sealed environments where inhabitants cannot come and go freely. Second, both are closely monitored. Inhabitants are constantly watched for any deviation from expected behavior. Third, both environments are placed, so far as possible, under centralized control. Finally, everything done in these environments is usually subject to elaborate rationalizations. There is, however, one very basic difference, which animal rights activists often minimize: the inhabitants of a research laboratory are animals rather than people. Such analogies and distinctions might be profitably studied. They must first, however, be removed from the realm of political rhetoric.

I hesitate to call for a demythologizing of the Holocaust. Looking back, I believe

the images of the concentration camps that filled my childhood performed, in a paradoxical way, a highly positive function. In a culture pervaded by nihilism, and without the benefit of religious beliefs, contemplating the Holocaust enabled my siblings and me to affirm moral values. By showing us absolute evil, it directed us toward virtue. By confronting us with the Devil, it helped us to believe in God.

But to derive values in such a negative way now seems to me, in the long run, inadequate. Now, I at least have the confidence to live with a bit more uncertainty, and my longing for absolutes is no longer quite so intense.

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